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The history of Marengo
County, Alabama, 1890 to
1900

THE HISTORY OF MARENGO COUNTY, ALABAMA
1890 TO 1900

By

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A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences
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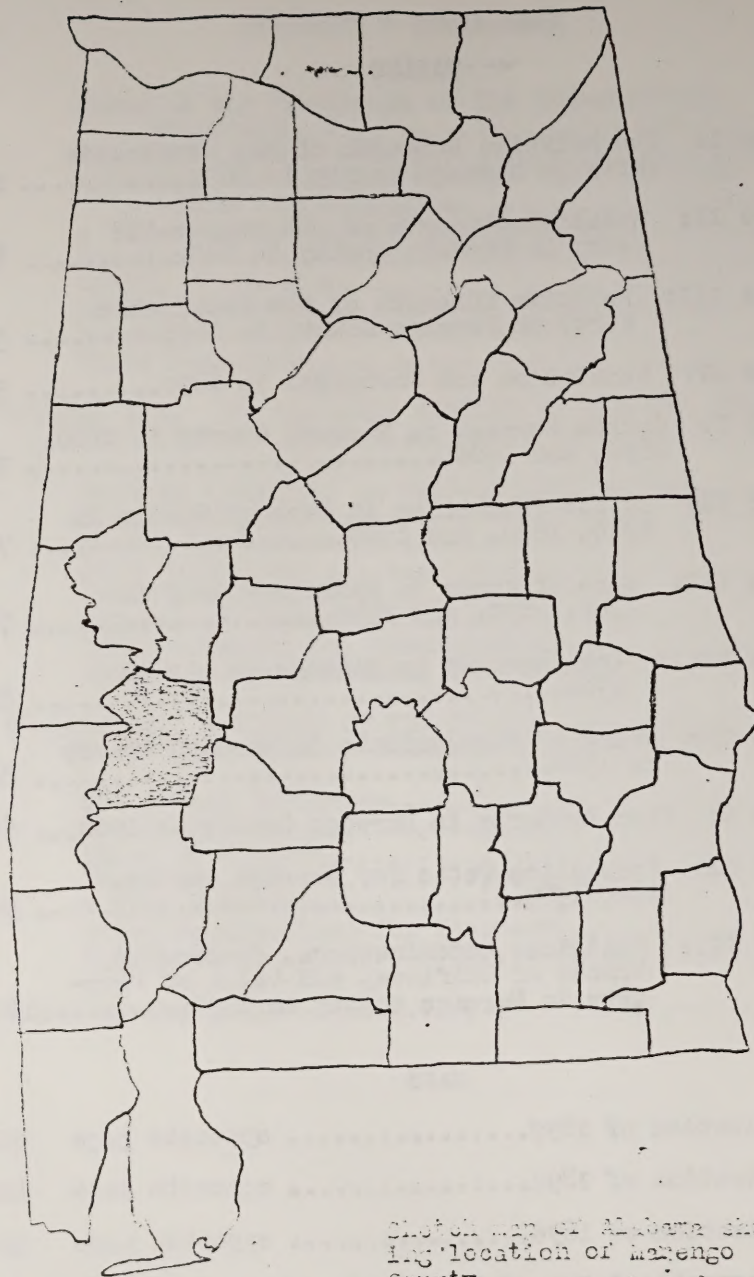
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Sketch map of Alabama showing location of Marengo County.

INTRODUCTION

Carpet-bag and Negro rule was overthrown in Alabama and, concurrently, in Marengo County in 1876.¹ From 1876 to the present, the Democratic party has controlled the political destinies of county politics, and has had a political dominance that has not been challenged many times. The greatest of these challenges came in the last decade of the nineteenth century with the advent of the Farmers' Alliance.

The Alliance did not develop from the plans of any group of founders but grew out of the economic plight of the farmer, which caused him to seek means to improve his situation. The Alliance had a simultaneous origin in two different sections of the great agricultural regions of the United States.² One was organized in the Northwest in 1880 by Milton George, editor of the Western Rural, a weekly agricultural magazine.³ George organized his first Alliance in Cook County, Illinois; and this Alliance began issuing charters to other locals. In 1880 the first such charter was issued to a

1. Moore, Albert Burton, History of Alabama, p. 487; Fleming, Walter L., Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama, pp. 795-796.

2. Buck, Solon J., The Agrarian Crusade, pp. 111-112; 117-118.

3. Hicks, John Donald, The Farmers Alliance, p. 96.

group of farmers near Filley, Nebraska.

George succeeded well with the movement he had begun in spite of opposition from other agricultural journals.¹ A convention of these Northwest Alliances was held in Chicago in October, 1880, and a national organization was perfected under the name of the National Farmers' Alliance, or the Northwestern Alliance, to distinguish it from another organization which had been organized in the South. At the Chicago convention, The Northwestern Alliance went on record "to oppose, in our respective political parties, the election of any candidate to office, state or national, who is not thoroughly in sympathy with the farmers' interests." By 1887, this Alliance had demanded free coinage of silver, issuance of more paper money, railway regulation, popular election of senators, and a good many other reforms of a popular nature. It attempted some cooperation in business but not so extensively as did the Southern Alliance, which originated in the South.² The Southern Alliance grew out of an independent Alliance which was formed in Texas.³

A group of frontier farmers had organized an Alliance in Lampasas County, Texas, as early as 1874 or

1. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

2. Buck, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-119; 121-122.

3. Blood, T. J., Handbook and History of the Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union, p. 50.

1875; the main purpose of which was to promote cooperation in such matters as catching horse thieves, rounding up estrays, and purchasing supplies.¹ This organization grew rapidly, perfected a state organization, but due to political dissension held its last meeting in 1879.²

The first Alliance of permanence in the South was organized in this same state on July 28, 1879.³ This Alliance was organized by a member of the order who had moved to Poolville in Parker County, Texas. From this new center, a new Alliance developed rapidly and soon a second state Alliance came into being. Cooperative enterprises and political demands of the Alliance for reforms practically wrecked the second Texas state organization. Just as dissolution seemed eminent, C. W. Macune, chairman of the executive committee, took over direction of the Alliance organization, and in January, 1887, secured the union of the Farmers' Union of Louisiana with the Texas Alliance. The new organization took the name of the National Farmers' Alliance and Cooperative Union of America. In December, 1888, at Meridian, Mississippi, the National Wheel, another farmers' organization, amalgamated with the National Farmers' Alliance

1. Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

2. Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

3. Owen, Thomas M., *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, Vol. I, p. 5631.

and Cooperative Union of America under the new name of the Farmers' and Laborers' Union of America. This name was again changed in 1889 to that of the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union.¹

As the Southern and Northwestern Alliances grew in membership and influence, there developed a movement in 1889 and 1890 for the organization of the farmers of the country into one organization. For this purpose, a meeting of the two alliances was held in St. Louis on December 3, 1889; but due to a survival of sectional differences and dissension over political policy, a union of the two parties proved impossible. The St. Louis Convention adopted a platform which demanded the abolition of national banks, free coinage of silver, government ownership of railroads, and a large supply of paper currency.² At the St. Louis meeting, the Southern Alliance had representatives from every state from Maryland to Texas, excepting West Virginia, as well as representatives from Indiana and Kansas. After the failure of the St. Louis meeting to achieve unity of farmers' organizations, the Southern Alliance began activity in the Northern states; and when the Southern Alliance met at Ocala, Florida, in December 1890, delegates were pre-

1. Buck, op. cit., pp. 115-117.

2. Buck, op. cit., p. 122.

sent from seven Northern states as well as those delegates from the states which were represented at the previous St. Louis meeting. At the time of the Ocala meeting of the Southern Alliance, there were meetings, also at Ocala, of the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association and the Colored Farmers' Alliance. The leaders of these organizations laid plans for the federation of the three organizations, but dissent and difficulties soon brought about the collapse of the Alliance as a national movement. But state and county organizations remained intact for some time.¹

The first local Alliance in Alabama was organized at Beech Grove, Madison County, in 1887, and within a two year period Alliance leaders had organized chapters in almost every county in the State. During the existence of the Alabama Farmers' Alliance, its activities for the betterment of the farmers were numerous and fairly effective. At the third annual meeting in 1890, it passed resolutions demanding legislation to encourage education, and sought reform of the national banking laws. In 1892, it passed resolutions requesting the National Government to lend money to farmers on real estate at low rates of interest. The State Alliance also entered into a cooperative endeavor by establishing a commercial

1. Buck, op. cit., pp. 122-124.

exchange at Montgomery, and undertook to establish a cooperative industrial-enterprise at Florence.¹

The first chapter of the Alliance in Marengo County was organized through the efforts of A. P. Dumas at Pineville early in 1889. Dumas served as a leader in Alliance affairs, having organized chapters at Jefferson, Sharpe's Church, and Dixons Mills;² and within a few months chapters sprang up in practically all of the farm centers in the county.³ By May 24,⁴ there were twenty-two Alliances in the County; and within the first six months membership grew to nearly 600.⁵

The purposes of the Alliance, to which the members subscribed, were set forth in a series of about thirty articles in the by-laws. Some of these principles were national in character—that is, the purposes of the national organization were carried over into the county and local organizations. Others were purely local in character. The members pledged themselves to buy cheap textiles woven in the South; to diversify their farming by raising more grain and livestock; to patronize home-industries; to oppose socialism, communism, and monopolies; to support the system of cooperative buying and

1. Owen, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 5631.

2. The Linden Reporter, February 22, 1889.

3. *Ibid.*, April 12, 1889.

4. *Ibid.*, May 24, 1889.

5. *Ibid.*, July 19, 1889.

selling, and to sustain the churches and schools.¹

In addition to these general principles, the members subscribed to certain social virtues, such as the requirement of visiting the sick, comforting the distressed, relieving the wants of a brother or a sister, burying the dead, caring for the widow, educating the orphan, and protecting and defending the principles of the Alliance. The motto of the organization was, "In all things essential, unity--in all things, charity."²

The state legislature upon the recommendation of Kolb, State Commissioner of Agriculture, appropriated a sum of money for the purpose of holding Farmers' Institutes throughout the state for the education of the farmer. Kolb was also empowered to employ experts and farmers to assist him in conducting these institutes at state expense.³

The first institute held in Marengo County, and concurrently the first county wide meeting of the Alliance, was at Jefferson on July 12 and 13, 1889.⁴ The meeting was addressed by Reuben F. Kolb. At that time, Kolb was held in high esteem by the Marengo Alliance leaders. One wrote that:

Honorable R. F. Kolb, the Commissioner of Agriculture, will address the farmers of Marengo in July. We are glad of this. Mr.

1. Ibid., April 19, and March 1, 1889.

2. Ibid., April 19, 1889.

3. Moore, op. cit., p. 604.

4. The Linden Reporter, July 19, 1889.

Kolb stands high as an efficient officer, a first class farmer, and an excellent citizen. There is some talk of his running for Governor; and if this be true, Marengo people will be very glad to see and hear him. Our county will have something to do with selecting the candidate, and who knows,¹ but that Mr. Kolb may get the Marengo vote.

Eighteen of the twenty-two local Alliances were represented at the Jefferson meeting. Those represented were: Double Creek, Liberty, Rural, Jefferson, Beaver Creek, Aimwell, Sweetwater, Union Grove, Shiloh, Dixons Mills, Nicholasville, Putnam, Octagon, Dayton, McKinley, Magnolia, Pineville, and Flat Woods. Officers elected for the ensuing year were as follows: John W. Jones of Jefferson, President; A. P. Dumas of Hampden, Vice-President; J. T. Jackson of Rembert, Treasurer; Q. S. Adams of Linden, Lecturer; Dr. A. B. Stone of Rembert, Assistant Lecturer; J. H. Jackson of Linden, Door-keeper; and² W. V. Vice of Shiloh, Chaplain.

The executive committee was composed of W. H. Grayson, John W. Young, and H. C. Dismukes. The immediate effect of the big rally at Jefferson seemed to be political. Some saw in this meeting an effort to establish class distinctions in politics, in that there was a

1. Ibid., May 24, 1889.

2. Ibid., July 19, 1889.

probability of a division of the white people of Alabama into two groups. It was becoming the united farmers against all other groups.¹ Some observers at once decided that Kolb was using the institutes for something other than the education of the farmer for it seemed that he was using them as a means of preparing his candidacy for the governorship.²

The newspapers of the State began to line up for or against Captain Kolb. His term as Commissioner of Agriculture expired in August, 1889. If he was to be a candidate for governor, some advocated his resigning at once as commissioner. A very warm contest ensued. Kolb was seeking reappointment as Commissioner of Agriculture for a two year term. In August 1889, he wrote:

If my administration has been acceptable to the people, I am certainly entitled to re-appointment. At the proper time I may or may not enter the race for Governor. The last Legislature enforced the duty on me of conducting Farmers' Institutes over the State. There is no politics in these Institutes.³

Captain Kolb was re-appointed Commissioner of Agriculture when his term expired the last of August 1889;⁴ but this did not prevent prominent Alliance men from bringing his name forward as a suitable candidate

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., July 26, 1889.

3. Ibid., August 30, 1889.

4. Ibid., September 6, 1889.

for governor. When the Alliance held its quarterly meeting at Aimwell in September, Kolb's name was freely mentioned by his many friends as the most suitable man for the next governor.¹

Kolb used the Farmers' Institutes to promote his political ambitions as well as to educate his farmer friends. The institutes brought Kolb into contact with the organized farm groups and gave momentum to his campaign for the nomination for governor. Thus, the Alliance, organized as a non-political body, was slowly but surely drawn into the campaign.²

1. Ibid., October 11, 1889.

2. Ibid., October 11, 1889.

CHAPTER I.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF MARENGO COUNTY
1890-1895

Inasmuch as the political history of Marengo County for this period was inextricably associated with the history of state and national issues, it is necessary at this point to give some attention to men and issues in 1890.

The gubernatorial campaign of 1890 was launched at the beginning of the new year. Captain Reuben F. Kolb made his formal announcement for Governor of Alabama on January 3, 1890.¹ Kolb, a member of the Farmers' Alliance, had asserted that "the next governor of Alabama would be an Alliance man regardless of his political convictions."²

However, party leaders felt that party lines should remain closely drawn. They urged that all true Democrats support the party as in the past, claiming that the greatest calamity which could befall Alabama would be political division, meaning that white supremacy would be thereby endangered.³ However, it was not fear of political division that caused conservative Demo-

1. The Linden Reporter, January 3, 1890.

2. Ibid., January 17, 1890, quoted from Greenville True Democrat.

3. Ibid.

cratic leaders to assail the Alliance and its leader, but fear that it was their intention to take over the party machinery from the conservatives. "It was a struggle between the conservative-machine element and the farmer-progressive element for the control of the party."¹ Therefore, to cloud real issues and to whip the farmers into line with the conservative-machine element, party harmony was constantly brought to the attention of the voters. Conservative Democratic organs like the Montgomery Advertiser and the Mobile Register practically assumed the authority to draw the line on the issues, and to say who was a Democrat and who was not. Hence, it is easy to understand why Kolb and his farmer friends should be accused of planning a third party movement in Alabama.²

1. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 609.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 604-605. Reuben F. Kolb was a typical Barbour County planter who lost his fortune in the Panic of 1873 and partially regained it by raising the famed Kolb Gem Watermelons. In 1887, he was appointed Commissioner of Agriculture; and in 1889, he was given unlimited authority to hire lecturers, organize "Farmers' Institutes" and educate the farmer. He probably gave the farmer some sound farm fundamentals; but he himself never failed to appear at these institutes and promote a demand for his candidacy for the governorship. In an Alliance convention at Auburn in 1890, the delegates freely endorsed him privately as a nominee for governor, but no official action was taken. In December, 1890, Kolb and several other prominent Alliance members attended the St. Louis convention of farmers and Knights of Labor with a view of working out a program for the toilers in the fields and mines. It was this last move that gave his opponents and the newspapers the chance to talk a third-party movement in Alabama, and they took advantage of the opportunity.

Although the Farmers' Alliance had been created as a non-political organization, the farmers had had it drilled into their ears that they should take more interest in politics. This was the attitude of the Alliance organizations in Marengo County. In January, 1890, leading Alliance men in the county said, "Let every man fight his own battles."¹ Therefore, it soon became evident that the Alliance would not remain neutral.² By the end of March, 1890, those in authority were saying that, although the Alliance was non-political, it would meddle with politics so far as was necessary to secure men for office who would vigilantly watch over its interests.³

The first quarterly meeting for 1890 of the Farmers' Alliance of Marengo County was held at McKinley on April 3 and 4. On the first day, a resolution was adopted and ordered published which severely criticised the Montgomery Advertiser for an unwarranted attack on Captain Reuben F. Kolb. The resolution also stated that the Advertiser's stand appeared to be a political ruse to defeat the efforts of the agricultural people to put one of their number in office. Captain Kolb was then recom-

1. The Linden Reporter, January 17, 1890.

2. Ibid., January 31, 1890.

3. Ibid., March 26, 1890.

mended as an efficient candidate for Governor of Alabama.¹ The vote on this resolution was 34 for and 18 against; and the following day, twelve members entered a protest against the resolution because it appeared to be an effort to force the Alliance into politics. John E. Hecker, editor and proprietor of The Linden Reporter,² was one of the dissenters.

The week following the county-wide Alliance meeting at McKinley, the Liberty Alliance of Linden went on record as opposing the action of the county-wide meeting held at McKinley, thus showing that there was dissension in the ranks concerning the entrance of the Alliance into politics.³ Later in the year, when the campaign grew hot, Hecker withdrew from the Alliance and fought Kolb at every turn. Throughout the remainder of the campaign, there was much agitation both for and against Kolb. It came to a climax when the county convention met in Linden.

The convention of the Democratic party of Marengo County was called to assemble at the court house in Linden on Tuesday, May 6, 1890, for the purpose of nominating candidates for the August election. These candi-

1. Ibid., April 4, 1890.

2. The Linden Reporter, April 4, 1890.

3. Ibid., April 11, 1890.

dates included a state senator, two representatives in the General Assembly, and a county superintendent of education. The county convention also appointed fourteen delegates to represent the party in the state convention.¹ The county convention allowed each voting precinct in the county two regular delegates, one additional delegate for every 150 voters, and one for 75 or more additional voters. Under this arrangement, Marengo had a total of 71 delegates.² The convention also instructed the delegation to the state convention to support Reuben F. Kolb for governor, the vote on this resolution was 41 for and 50 against. It endorsed Major M. C. Burke of Marengo County for state superintendent of education, and the delegates were instructed to vote for him as long as his name remained before the convention. The convention gave no instructions as to the other candidates for state offices. It also made nominations for certain of the county offices: John H. Minge was nominated state senator by acclamation; Daniel John Meador and James A. Steele won the nomination for representatives over their opponents, Charles D. Walker and John W. Jones, on the first ballot; and W. K. Thomas received the nomination

1. Ibid., April 18, 1890.

2. Ibid., May 9, 1890.

for county superintendent of education by acclamation.¹

After the county convention on May 6, the editor of the Linden Reporter, who had been fighting Captain Kolb ever since his endorsement by the Alliance at McKinley in April, continued his aggressive campaign against the "Genial Reuben" as he was called by his friends. He stated that he thought there were men in the race better suited for this high office; however, should Kolb be nominated by the State Democratic Convention, the Reporter promised to support him as heartily as possible.²

The State Democratic Convention assembled at Montgomery on May 28, 1890. There were four candidates seeking the nomination for governor in addition to Reuben F. Kolb. These men were: Thomas G. Jones of Montgomery, Joseph F. Johnston of Jefferson, Judge William Richardson of Madison, and James Crook of Calhoun. It was really Kolb against the other four, for they were determined to defeat him by some means.³ On the first ballot, Kolb received 235 votes; Johnson, 104; Richardson, 88; Crook, 52; and Jones, 45. On the thirty-eighth ballot Kolb had gained six votes, for a total of 241; Johnson, 12, making 116; and Jones had 45, the same number he received on the first ballot. In order to defeat

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., May 23, 1890.

3. Moore, op. cit., p. 613.

Kolb, three of the four opponents must be withdrawn; and all their strength given to the fourth man. If Jones were withdrawn, a part of his vote would go to Kolb, thereby nominating him; whereas, the other three could deliver their strength to the fourth man and, consequently, nominate him. Therefore, Jones, the weakest candidate, was selected in a caucus and nominated on the thirty-ninth ballot.¹ Kolb accepted the action of the convention gracefully and stated that he was ready to stump the State for the nominee. His statement was generally accepted as sincere. The Democrats immediately lined up to elect Jones over his Republican opponent, B. M. Long.²

Even though there had been some fear that the Alliance would enter the campaign against the Democrats, the outcome in Marengo County indicated that the Republicans were the only opposition to the Democrat nominees. When the election was over and the votes had been counted, the total vote in Marengo County was found to be 4,712 for Jones and 928 for Long, the Republican candidate. No official totals or estimates for any other candidates were given in the county papers at that time. It was evident, then, that within the county, there was no op-

1. Clark, John B., Populism in Alabama, pp. 105-107.

2. The Linden Reporter, June 6, 1890.

position to the "Organized Party."¹ Except for very few precincts, the vote for the state officers and the county nominees coincided. At Macon, Minge received 409 votes which were 22 more than the state ticket; at Nanafalia, the county nominees received one vote more than the state ticket; and at Demopolis, Minge fell behind one vote. No explanation was given for these slight variations.²

Tom Jones was elected, and organized Democracy seemed to have been saved, but elections were not over. The Democratic Executive Committee of the county met in the court house in Linden on August 16 to arrange for the meeting of the county convention which was to select delegates to the congressional convention in Mobile. The committee decided that thereafter all Democratic voters, irrespective of color, should be recognized in the beat meetings.³ The county convention met in Linden on August 29, and selected 24 delegates to attend the congressional convention to be held in Mobile. The delegates were instructed to support Richard H. Clarke of Mobile for reelection. When the congressional convention assembled in Mobile to nominate a congressman, it

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1. Ibid., August 15, 1890.
 2. Ibid., August 22, 1890.
 3. Ibid., August 22, 1890.

chose Clarke by a unanimous vote of every county in the first district. He was returned to Congress at the general election.¹

The history of the "Turbulent Nineties" is interesting for something besides the unrest of the farmer and his efforts to get control of the party machinery. In each election of the period, bids were made for the support of the Negro voters. Sentiment was somewhat divided, but the majority supported the idea of allowing the Negro to vote.² Some thought that the only way to keep the Negro from being influenced by the Republicans was to allow him to vote within the Democratic party. There was considerable private and public discussion of the problem. As a result of this, the Democratic Executive Committee of Marengo County recommended that Negroes be allowed to participate in party caucuses.³

Some criticism of the executive committee's stand on Negro Democrats was heard. There was, however, some favorable reaction. The McKinley Beat meeting went on record as approving the stand of the County Executive Committee and extended an invitation to the colored voters to cooperate with the white voters in securing

1. Ibid., September 12, 1890.

2. Ibid., April 25, 1890; Moore, op. cit., pp. 622-623.

3. Ibid., August 22, 1890.

good men for office; Protection from violence and intimidation was offered to all Negroes who agreed to cooperate with the white voters of the Democratic party.¹ Nor did these invitations fall on deaf ears, for the records show that the Reverend J. R. Beckham, a colored minister from Spring Hill, canvassed the county for Clarke, the Democratic nominee for Congress. Beckham persuaded many of his colored neighbors of the error of opposing the white people of the county.² Colored Democratic clubs were organized at McKinley, Demopolis, Spring Hill, and other points. After the election of 1890, the Democratic Executive Committee opened the doors of the Democratic party to Negroes.³ Thus ended the first round of the organized Democratic machine politicians to control politics in Alabama and to defeat the dauntless Reuben F. Kolb for control of the party machinery in the State. Two more rounds were necessary before this Alliance leader could be subdued. Instead of his enemies having defeated and humiliated him and his farmer supporters in the election of 1890, they had only driven him to greater efforts. He was held up to his

1. The Linden Reporter, June 20, 1890.

2. Ibid., November 7, 1890.

3. Ibid., November 22, 1890.

supporters as a political martyr of the cause for which farmers were so valiantly contending.

Kolb began a thorough canvass of the State after his defeat in 1890¹ and continued the fight until he was counted out by the organized machine in 1892.²

The campaign of 1892 was much more complicated than the one of 1890, because it ultimately resulted in an outright split in the Democratic party.³ National politics and the silver question entered the contest. The Alliance platform, demanding the sub-treasury plan,⁴ government ownership of the means of communication and transportation, an income tax, and provision for loans from government secured by land, loomed large in the campaign.

Early in 1891, the silver issue came to the front again. Free silver was supported by the South and West,

1. Moore, op. cit., p. 617.

2. Ibid., p. 624; Sparkman, John, The Kolb-Oates Campaign of 1894, p. 6.

3. Clark, op. cit., p. 132-133.

4. Moore, op. cit., p. 606.

The sub-treasury plan was a scheme of government aid to the farmers. Government warehouses were to be constructed in which could be stored non-perishable farm products. Each warehouse was to be accompanied by a sub-treasury office which would loan to the farmers greenbacks up to eighty per cent of the marketable value of the products stored. A small amount for insurance, storage, and handling was to be paid and a low rate of interest, say one per cent. With this plan in effect, the farmer thought he would have a much needed credit, and a more judicious opportunity to market his farm products.

but was generally opposed by the Middle and New England States. The Alliance and all labor organizations were for free silver. Free silver was recognized as a Democratic policy despite the fact that Grover Cleveland, the most talked of man for the presidential nomination in 1892, came out in favor of the gold standard.¹ Many predicted that, if Cleveland were offered the nomination for President on a free silver platform, he would accept.²

Roger Q. Mills, member of the House of Representatives from Texas, was a staunch advocate of free coinage of silver, but would not have it becloud the political horizon on the eve of the campaign. He said that free coinage would produce no good effect until taxation was reduced. He believed that the party should remain united on the platform, "tariff for revenue only," and that it would be dangerous to start wrangling over silver and thus divide forces.³ The editor of the Montgomery Advertiser was in entire accord with those who would hold to the tariff as the issue. He pointed out that Cleveland was really for the bi-metallic standard, but that he did not believe in tempting fate by bringing the silver ques-

1. Nevins, Allan, Grover Cleveland, A Study in Courage, p. 467.

2. The Linden Reporter, February 17, 1891, quoted from The National Democrat.

3. Ibid., March 20, 1891.

tion into the campaign.¹ Honorable R. E. Clarke said that the object of the party was to name the right man and that he believed Grover Cleveland was that man.²

The "Organized Party" made every possible effort to prevent a split in its ranks. The County Democratic Executive Committee urged the organization of Democratic clubs to mould public opinion in the forthcoming state and national elections.³ John E. Hecker, editor and proprietor of the Linden Reporter, wrote that success in politics depends on party organization.⁴ The State Democratic Executive Committee met in Montgomery in July, 1891, and recommended the formation of Democratic clubs in every precinct in the State.⁵ In pursuance of this suggestion from the state committee, Democratic clubs were organized in Marengo County, first at McKinley, next at Linden, and finally in practically every precinct in the county.⁶

A declaration of principles of Democracy was form-

1. Ibid., March 27, 1891, quoted from Montgomery Advertiser.

2. Ibid., April 17, 1891, quoted from Washington Post.

3. Ibid., June 26, 1891.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., July 3, 1891.

6. Ibid., July 31, 1891.

ulated by the state committee and adopted by the county committees. It contained the following principles:

The objects of this society are:

1. To foster and disseminate principles of Democracy
2. To preserve the Constitution of the United States, the autonomy of states, and local self-government
3. Opposition to centralized power
4. Opposition to high tariff
5. Opposition to unnecessary commercial restrictions
6. Opposition to class legislation
7. To maintain inviolate, the fundamental principles of Democracy ¹

Since reconstruction days, the threat of Republican rule had always been held up to the politically wayward to whip them into line. Harango was no exception. J. R. McLendon warned both conservative and Jeffersonian Democrats that, "All in the world the Republican party wants is for Democrats to divide."²

Still other means were used to hold the lines and prevent a split. The usual barbecues, picnics, and brush arbor meetings were used to reach the voters.³ However, before the State Democratic Convention met, it became apparent that, even though the rival factions

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., July 10, 1891, quoted from letter in Alliance Herald.

3. Notices of such meetings, speakings, and so forth appeared in the county papers for several months preceding the final break at the state convention where Jones defeated Kolb 372 to 68 for the nomination for governor.

might be united in the national election, they would certainly be divided in state politics.¹

All efforts of the conservative Democrats served only to draw more sharply the lines between them and the followers of Captain Kolb.² The followers of Captain Kolb had never become reconciled to his defeat for the nomination for governor of Alabama in 1890. It became evident in the winter of 1891 that the race for governor in 1892 would lie between Kolb and Jones. Kolb had the solid backing of the Farmers' Alliance; while Jones was supported by the old line Democrats.

Kolb and his followers always claimed they were regular Democrats and were in no way trying to form a third party movement. The contest between the two leading candidates for support in the state convention started early. There were many bitter political battles and much hostile feeling. Many beats sent up to the county conventions two delegations, and many counties sent up two delegations to the state convention. In a majority of cases, the "Organized Party" decided the contested elections in favor of the conservative Democrats.³ The contest between Jones and Kolb grew hotter as the time for the state convention approached. The

1. The Linden Reporter, May 25, 1891.

2. Ibid., October 23, 1891, quoted from Birmingham News.

3. Moore, op. cit., p. 624.

convention assembled in Montgomery the first week in June and nominated Jones by a vote of 372.4 to 67.6 for Kolb. The Marengo delegation voted for the nomination of Jones.¹ Governor Jones' acceptance speech called for harmony and peace between the Negroes and whites and the factions among the whites. He said: "Come what may, we conquer, for the organized Democracy bears aloft the white flag of peace."²

This time Kolb and his followers refused to be guided by the outcome of the convention. Kolb had prophesied that there would be two conventions; that he would be nominated by one, and that he would win. Only the last prophecy failed to come true. He organized a separate convention of his followers which nominated him for governor, and B. K. Collier of Jefferson County, a well known Republican, for Attorney-General. One plank of the platform adopted at this time contained a strong bid for the support of the Negro voters.³

The campaign was hard fought. Kolb's followers in Marengo County organized at once to fight an aggressive campaign in his behalf.⁴ The agitation was so great that

1. The Linden Reporter, June 17, 1892.

2. Ibid., July 1, 1892.

3. Ibid., June 17, 1892.

4. Ibid., June 24, 1892.

nearly 6,000 voters came out on election day. Marengo County voted, as did the State, in favor of Jones and organized Democracy. In this election Jones polled 3,169 votes and Kolb 2,152 respectively.¹

The county politics of that year centered around the election of representatives. J. W. Jones and A. J. Peacock, supporters and followers of Kolb's principles, were defeated by D. J. Meador and J. A. Steele, representing the conservative element of the party. Jones and Peacock contested the election on the grounds of fraud; but they lost the contest.²

As soon as the governor was elected, an active campaign was begun in behalf of Cleveland, the Democratic nominee for President. The Republicans were running Benjamin Harrison and the People's Party had nominated James B. Weaver of Iowa. Those who had bolted the Democratic party to support Kolb were requested to pledge support of the national Democratic ticket. Every effort was made to reconcile the two opposing factions of alleged Democrats; for all felt that they must present a united front to the Republicans in the national election which came in November 1892.³ Cleveland piled up a big

1. Ibid., August 12, 1892. For more complete data on the election returns in Marengo County see table on page 29.

2. Ibid., August 26, 1892.

3. Ibid., August 12, 1892.

majority in Marengo." In commenting on the election, the Reporter saw better things ahead when it said, "This means law, order, quiet, and peace from one end of the Union to the other. Peace always brings prosperity, plenty, and happiness. There will be an honest government administered by honest men."¹

The Democrats who bolted the organized party in 1892 and formed the Jeffersonian Democratic party made a bid early in 1893 to the regular organized Democratic party for peace and harmony in the election of 1894. The Jeffersonians were anxious to reunite with the organized party, but wanted to name their own terms as they were still supporting Kolb for governor.²

The editor of the Reform Democrat, the official organ of the Farmers' Alliance in Marengo County, was anxious to reconcile past differences.³

1. Ibid., November 11, 1892.

2. Ibid., May 19, 1892.

3. The Reform Democrat, June 15, 1893..

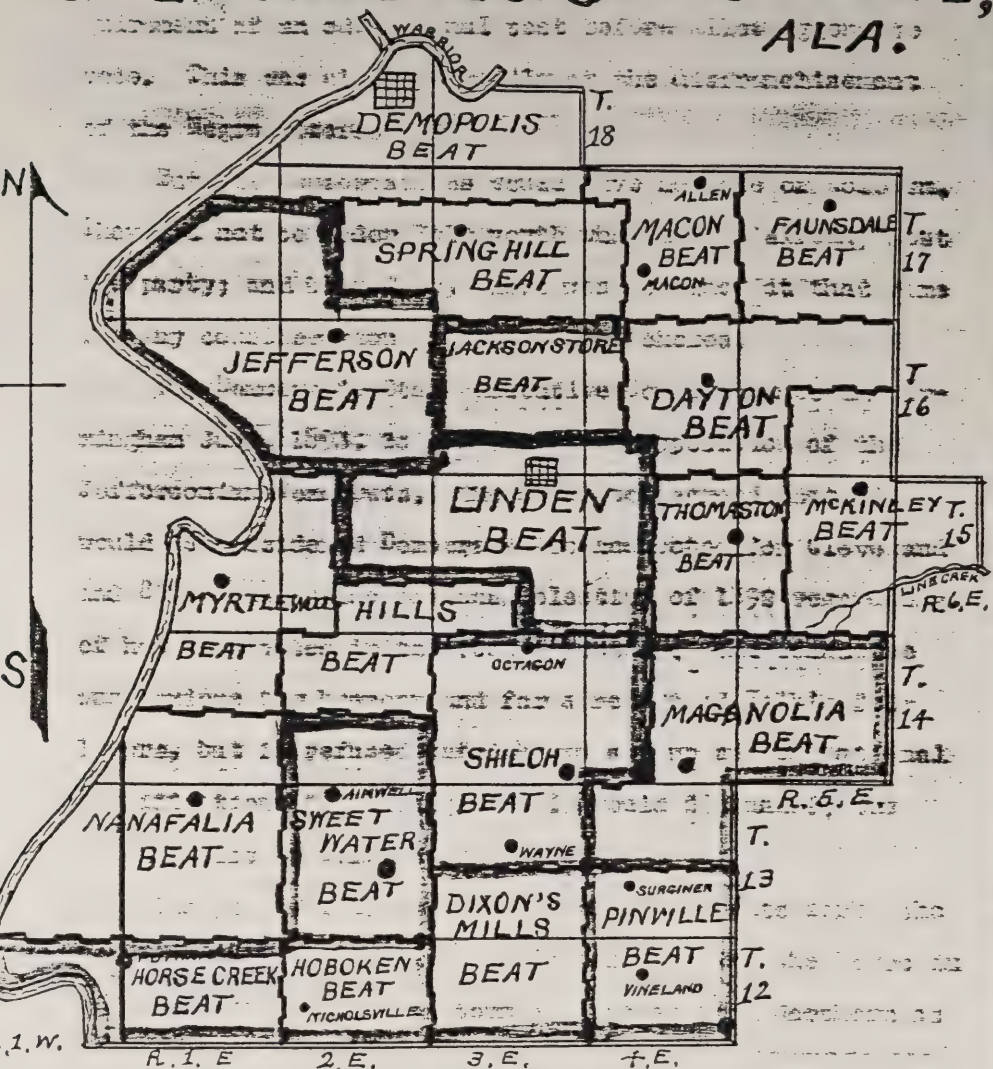
TABLE I

Relative Strength of Democratic Party
in Marengo County in 1892

	Number of votes received by each candidate
For Governor:	
Thomas G. Jones.....	Democrat.....3169
Reuben F. Kolb.....	Jeffersonian
	Democrat.....2152
For Representatives:	
D. J. Meador.....	Democrat.....3215
J. A. Steele.....	Democrat.....3204
John W. Jones.....	Jeffersonian
	Democrat.....2105
A. J. Peacock.....	Jeffersonian
	Democrat.....2102
For Tax Assessor:	
J. L. Skinner.....	Democrat.....3315
Thomas J. Lewis.....	Jeffersonian
	Democrat.....1960
For Commissioners:	
G. T. Skinner.....	Democrat.....3276
W. H. Selden.....	Democrat.....4916
C. H. Miller.....	Democrat.....5110
Lewis L. Simmons.....	Jeffersonian
	Democrat.....903
W. K. Chapman.....	Democrat.....3559

For the various county offices, the Democratic nominees for representatives, tax assessor, and commissioners were the only candidates who were opposed by the Jeffer-

MAP OF MARENGO COUNTY, ALA.



MAP II ELECTION OF 1892
KOLB BEATS

sonian Democrats.¹

One thing the Jeffersonians demanded was the requirement of an educational test before allowing one to vote. This was aimed primarily at the disfranchisement of the Negro voters.²

But the Conservatives would have no more of Kolbism. They did not consider Kolb worth what he had already cost the party; and therefore, there was no place at that time for any consideration of compromise schemes.³

The Democratic State Executive Committee met in Birmingham June, 1893, to consider the proposition of the Jeffersonian Democrats. The committee agreed that all would be considered Democrats who had voted for Cleveland and Stevenson in the national election of 1892 regardless of how they voted in the state election. The committee was anxious for harmony and for a return of Kolb's followers, but it refused outright to set up any educational qualifications for voting, for it would disqualify the white masses as well as the Negro.⁴

The proposal of the Jeffersonian Democrats marks the first effort of the white man to disfranchise the Negro in Alabama. It received a storm of protest from Northern as

1. The Linden Reporter, August 12, 1892.

2. Ibid., May 19, 1893.

3. Ibid., May 26, 1893, quoted from the Birmingham Times.

4. Ibid., June 9, 1893.

well as Southern sources.¹

The Democratic Executive Committee of Marengo County was in absolute accord with the state committee. The county committee held that the Negro could not then be ruled out of politics because the law allowed him to vote and, under the existing circumstances, it was better for the Negro and the white man for Negroes to vote.² However, the Marengo Executive Committee laid down more stringent rules for the return into the party of the followers of Kolb. Not only did it demand that they should have voted for Cleveland and Stevenson in the last national election, but also in addition, it demanded that each voter sign a pledge of allegiance to the party. Since this was much more than the state committee demanded, it drew many objections from those who desired to return, and from those within the party who were anxious to heal past differences.³

Much criticism was leveled at Marengo County by the state press for having failed to draw Negroes to serve on grand and petit juries.⁴ This criticism came from those

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., July 14, 1893.

3. The Reform Democrat, May 25, 1893.

4. Ibid., July 6, 1893.

who were in favor of Negroes.¹

The Jury Commission of Marengo County requested an opinion of Judge James T. Jones, Judge of the First Judicial District, as to who should be chosen to serve on juries. He wrote:

Select from the male residents of the county, over 21 and under 60 years of age, the names of all such persons who in your opinion are fit and competent to discharge the duties of grand and petit juries with honesty, impartiality, and intelligence.²

The plan of selecting those for jury service "who in your opinion are fit" was accepted by Marengo as a basis for the selection of jurymen. This plan for selecting jurymen and the county primary system were known as the "Marengo Plan." It was freely copied by other counties.³ By the adoption of this plan, Marengo was considered the first county in the State "to redeem itself from Negro domination" without the use of intimidation and brute force.⁴

1. The Negroes, themselves, did not expect to be chosen. One wrote: "We are not yet ready to be put on juries. Seventy-five per cent of the Negroes in Marengo County do not understand the law and would not if it were told them." (Letter of R. E. Chess, Negro, to the Reform Democrat, July 20, 1893). What the Negro wanted, according to one individual, was education and emancipation from the Republican party. He was beginning to realize that the Southern people were his best friends (H. C. C. Astwood, a Negro residing in New York City, in a letter quoted in the Reform Democrat, October 11, 1894).

2. The Linden Reporter, October 6, 1893.

3. Ibid., October 13, 1893.

4. The Reform Democrat, July 20, 1893, quoted from the Montgomery Journal.

Although Negro control was the paramount issue of the Marengo Plan, there were other phases which should be mentioned in this connection. One question was how to settle the matter of representation in county conventions. Marengo was the first county to solve this question. The county did this by giving white and black beats a like representation, possibly five delegates to each beat. Another plan was one calling for a primary system. This plan gave absolute control of the party machinery to the whites because Negroes could be excluded from the primaries by party rules. This was fundamentally the demand of the Jeffersonian Democrats as a prerequisite for returning to the regular organized party. This plan bore the endorsement of the chairman of the State Democratic Executive Committee.¹

The accelerated efforts of Alabama Democrats to control the Negro, coupled with the aggressive fight of Kolb for control of the party with some Republican and Negro support, stirred up interest in the North and East. Alabama editors were very antagonistic in their attitude toward the Chicago Tribune which sent a staff correspondent to Alabama to investigate and study the political situation. Marengo and Hale, being Black Belt counties, were visited first.²

1. Ibid., July 20, 1893, an analysis of the "Marengo Plan" quoted from the Montgomery Journal.

2. The Linden Reporter, December 21, 1894.

The Alliance publication did all in its power to bring about a reconciliation between the two factions of the Democratic party. It pointed out that there were three Negro voters in Marengo County to one white voter; that, should they exert themselves, not only would they hold the balance of power, but also would hold that power itself.¹ As the election of 1894 approached, the Alliance leaders tried harder and harder to bring about harmony. The new Editor of the Reform Democrat called for the "subordination of personal feeling" to the public good and beckoned his Alliance friends to "have a firm belief in the principles of the party" and "vote the ticket" in the coming elections.² In spite of all the efforts that had been made to reunite the Democratic party, the campaign of 1894 was hard fought and bitter. Kolb was the natural leader of the forces opposed to the "Organized party" and the leadership of the conservative Democratic forces lay between William C. Oates of Henry County and Joseph F. Johnston of Jefferson County.

Kolb's friends began waging an aggressive campaign in Marengo County in his favor. They started early and soon assumed the name Populists and called on others to

1. The Reform Democrat, August 20, 1893.

2. Ibid., August 20, 1893.

come out against the "Organized Democrats."¹ Kolb's supporters held a mass meeting at Linden in the interest of his campaign. Dr. R. J. Harris was the principal speaker. He spoke chiefly in denunciation of Jones and in laudation of Kolb.²

Without a careful analysis, it would seem that Kolb's cause was further strengthened in the county when it was found that his followers in Marengo had supported Harrison instead of Cleveland after Weaver was eliminated. This left them outside the Democratic party since the test of Democracy was "Did you vote for Cleveland?"³ But an analysis of the elections of 1892 and 1894 disprove that statement. In 1892 Kolb received 2152 votes or 40 per cent of the total cast in Marengo for governor.⁴ In 1894 he received only 1039 or 27 per cent of the total vote cast for governor.⁵ He received less than one-half as many votes in 1894 as in 1892 and the percentage was smaller. Hence there is no proof that Kolb's cause was strengthened because those who voted for Harrison in 1892 were eliminated from the Democratic party.

A fusion convention of Kolb followers met in Birn-

1. Ibid., March 10, 1894, quoted from the Living Truth, Greenville, Alabama.

2. Ibid., January 5, 1894.

3. The Linden Reporter, January 5, 1894.

4. Supra., p. 26.

5. Infra., p. 37.

ingham, February 8, 1894, for the purpose of adopting a platform and preparing a slate of candidates for state offices. As would be expected, Kolb was nominated for governor and a platform was adopted which advocated free coinage of silver, an income tax, free vote, an honest count, a tariff for revenue, a removal of convicts from the mines, a child labor law, and an invitation to business men outside the state to invest in Alabama enterprises.¹

The Marengo County Democratic Convention met in Linden, May 16, 1894, and selected eleven delegates to the state convention. All were instructed to support Oates. The Jeffersonian Democrats were supporting Joseph F. Johnston for governor, but they lost to the Oates delegates by a close vote. Oates received 45.2 and Johnston 39.6 of the votes cast. The delegates selected were: George T. Skinner, John C. Webb, J. J. King, E. B. McCarthy, W. W. Bruce, E. McCaa, Dr. W. H. Allen, S. M. Finch, S. G. Woolf, Dr. T. J. Bettis, and J. S. Grett.² A resolution endorsing John C. Anderson as candidate for attorney-general was adopted without a dissenting vote. Hims Walker was renominated state senator by acclamation.

The convention selected D. J. Meador and D. M. Prow-

1. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 631.

2. The Linden Reporter, May 18, 1894.

ell as candidates for the lower house of the legislature. R. R. Poole, the Jeffersonian Democratic candidate, was defeated for the nomination by a very narrow margin.¹

The contest for nomination for the office of county superintendent of education by the convention proved to be rather exciting. C. W. Askew and W. K. Thomas, the incumbent, were seeking the nomination. When their names were placed in nomination, several of the Oates precincts did not vote; and it soon became evident that a movement was on foot to defeat Thomas. When Demopolis cast its vote, it was challenged by a member of its own delegation. When other Oates beats withdrew their votes, excitement ran high. At this juncture Askew's name was withdrawn and quiet restored.² Then the convention renominated W. K. Thomas for a second term.³

The convention endorsed Cleveland's administration and Jones's policies; but the representatives were not instructed to vote for John Tyler Morgan for the United States Senate. Morgan was a bi-metallist; while the majority of the Democrats in Marengo adhered to Cleveland and the gold standard in 1894.⁴

The Democratic State Convention met in Montgomery on

1. Ibid.

2. Askew's name was withdrawn because the friends of Askew and Frowell had been trading votes. In the outcome of the trade Askew was the loser.

3. The Reform Democrat, May 17, 1894.

4. The Linden Reporter, May 18, 1894.

May 22. Oates was in the lead for governor by a vote of 273 to 232 for Johnston on the first ballot; Johnston withdrew after the first ballot and Oates was nominated¹ by acclamation.

When the Republican convention assembled in Birmingham in April, there was a strong movement to endorse Kolb as the candidate for governor. Kolb asked the convention not to do this until after the Democratic convention had met. In this effort to "straddle the fence" he lost some of his support from that source. A resolution was passed urging the Negroes in sixteen counties not to register, so that their votes could not be counted in the August primary. In those counties where the Republicans felt that they could control the Negro vote, a strong effort was made to get all to register and prepare to vote for Kolb in the August primaries.²

Kolb had a hard time financing the campaign of 1894. He made a trip to Washington in the early part of the year to get both Republican money and political backing for his campaign. He was able to raise a few thousand dollars and get some support. Northern politicians saw in this a chance to break the Solid South and get more support for the cause of protection.³ Governor Jones wrote

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., April 20, 1894.

3. Ibid., March 19, 1894.

some of the Northern Senators, explaining the part which Kolb had played in the elections of 1890 and 1892. Upon learning this, Kolb wrote Jones a very insulting letter, accusing him of stealing the election of 1892. Governor Jones did not respond to this letter, but the unfavorable publicity which Kolb had already drawn to himself kept many from leaving the organized party and giving him support.¹

The race for nomination for attorney-general, in which Marengo County was so vitally interested, was very close. The final vote on the thirteenth ballot was 255 for James Pitts of Tuscaloosa to 249 for John C. Anderson of Marengo.²

From the time of the Democratic convention until the election, the battle between Oates for Organized Democracy and Kolb for Republicanism, Populism, and several other "isms" raged from one end of the State to the other. In spite of the advice of the Republican convention in Birmingham to do otherwise, the Negroes in Marengo County registered in large numbers, sufficient to roll up a rousing majority for the Democratic ticket.³

The campaign in Marengo County centered around the Alliance-Jeffersonian candidates, J. M. Miller, who op-

1. Ibid., April 27, 1894.
2. Ibid., May 25, 1894.
3. Ibid., June 1, 1894.

posed Mims Walker for the state senate, and R. J. Harris and J. E. Nichols, who opposed D. J. Meador and D. M. Prowell for representatives.¹ There were many accusations and counter-accusations, and retorts of all kinds thrown from one side to the other. Many cries of "Boss-rule" and "This is a free country" were heard on all sides. One paper stated: "If there was ever a greater mess, politically speaking, that has covered the earth since the day Adam transgressed the law, than the Kolb outfit, it is not recorded."²

The results of the election the first Monday in August, 1894, showed a majority of more than 26,000 for Oates. Marengo County gave decisive majorities to all Democratic candidates. The following table shows the relative strength of the Democratic party in Marengo County in 1894.

1. The Reform Democrat, June 7, 1894.
 2. The Linden Reporter, June 29, 1894.

TABLE II

Relative Strength of Democratic Party in
Marengo County in 1894¹

For Governor:

W. C. Oates.....	Democrat.....	2608
Reuben F. Kolb.....	Populist.....	1039

For State Senator:

Hims Walker.....	Democrat.....	2785
J. M. Miller.....	Populist.....	998

For County Superintendent of Education:

W. K. Thomas.....	Democrat.....	2898
E. J. Robertson.....	Populist.....	810

For State Representative:

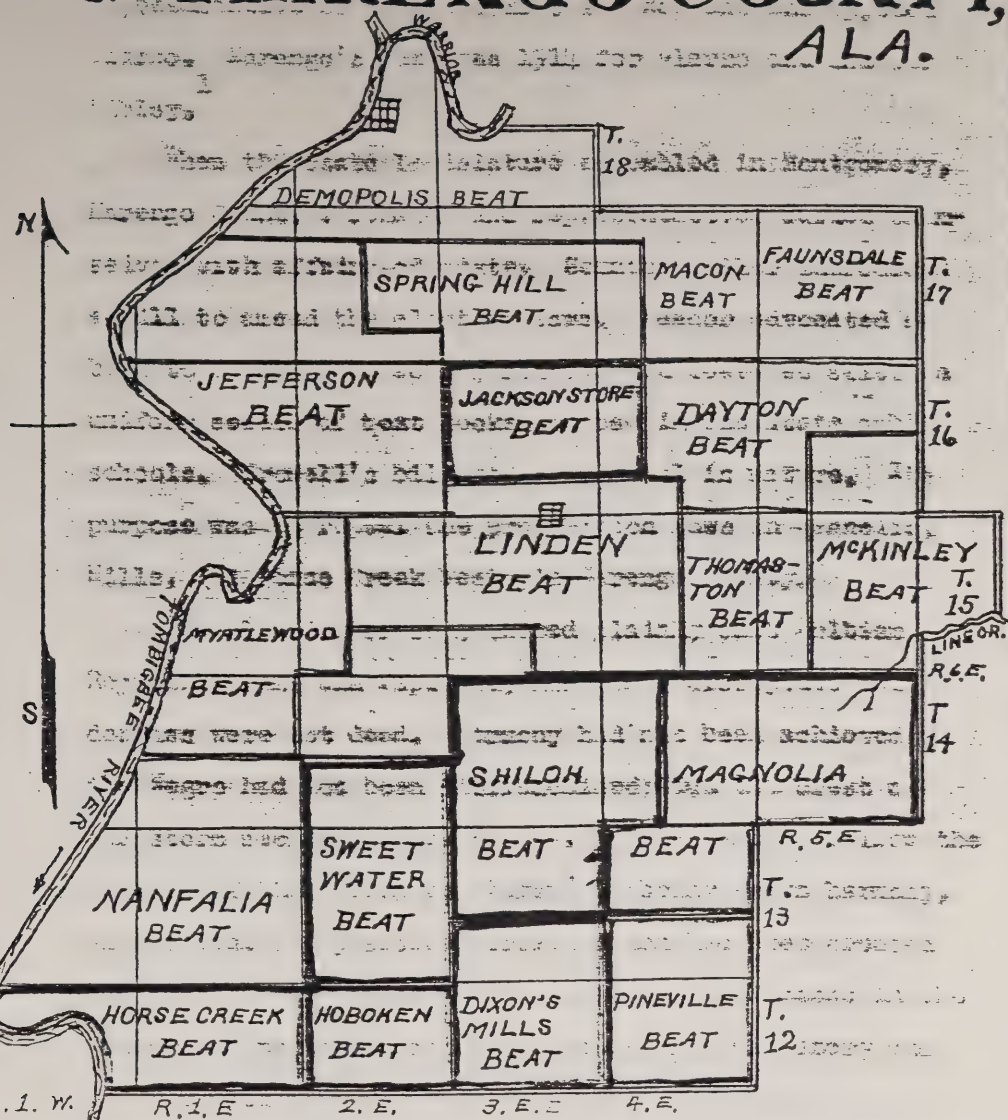
D. J. Meador.....	Democrat.....	2792
D. M. Frowell.....	Democrat.....	2758
R. J. Harris.....	Populist.....	1001
J. E. Nichols.....	Populist.....	928

The Marengo County Democratic Convention met in Linden for a second time August 25, 1894, to select delegates to the district convention in Mobile. Twenty-two delegates were selected and were instructed to vote for R. H. Clarke for Congress.² This was Clarke's fourth nomination, in all of which Marengo had supported him. He

1. Ibid., August 17, 1894.

2. Ibid., June 29, 1894, quoted from the Eutaw Mirror.

MAP OF MARENGO COUNTY, ALA.



MAP II ELECTION OF 1894

KOLB BEATS



first went to Congress¹ in 1888. Guy C. Sibley of Mobile, representative of the Populists and Republicans opposed Clarke. Marengo's vote was 1914 for Clarke and 451 for Sibley.

When the state legislature assembled in Montgomery, Marengo County's senator and representatives busied themselves with affairs of state. Senator Walker introduced a bill to amend the election laws. Meador advocated a bill to establish a county school book board to select a uniform series of text books for use in the state public schools. Prowell's bill was more local in nature. Its purpose was to repeal the prohibition laws in Magnolia, Hills, and Horse Creek beats in Marengo County.²

The election of 1894 showed plainly that Kolbism, Republicanism, and Populism, and other disruptive tendencies were not dead. Harmony had not been achieved; the Negro had not been disfranchised; but the crest of the storm seemed to have passed. It remains to follow the efforts of the "Organized Party" to bring about harmony, and to heal the political breach which had been created by three hectic struggles of dissatisfied elements in the Democratic party for control of the party machinery and its offices.

1. Ibid., July 20, 1894.

2. Ibid., October 22, 1894.

CHAPTER II

A POLITICAL HISTORY OF MARENGO COUNTY
FROM 1895 TO 1900

From 1895 to 1900, state and national problems were paramount issues for the people of Marengo County.

One of the first appointments made by Governor Oates, after being inducted into office, was a successor to Judge Taylor Jones, Circuit Judge for the First Judicial District, who had died early in 1895. Leading newspapers suggested John C. Anderson of Marengo, W. S. Anderson or C. J. Gorrey of Mobile, J. T. Lackland of Clark County, and W. F. Glover of Choctaw. Governor Oates appointed John C. Anderson to fill the unexpired term of Jones.¹

The original First Judicial Circuit was composed of Marengo, Choctaw, Clark, Monroe, Washington, and Baldwin counties. The legislature in 1895 divided the circuit. It placed Baldwin and Washington counties with Mobile. Marengo, Choctaw, Clark, and Monroe counties composed the new First Judicial Circuit over which Judge Anderson presided.²

By 1895 agitation had begun for a new constitution in Alabama which would disfranchise the Negro. In other

1. *The Linden Reporter*, February 22, 1895.

2. *Ibid.*, February 15, 1895.

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respects, also, the constitution of 1876 was somewhat out of step with the times. In the years 1895-1896 the silver issue reached a climax in the Bryan-McKinley campaign, and there was some work yet to be accomplished in bringing all the discontented elements into harmony within the Democratic party. These were the issues which evoked the greatest amount of discussion in the county during the period.

At the beginning of the administration of Governor Oates, times were hard and the money question occupied much of the attention of Maricopa politicians. Cotton was five cents per pound.¹ One newspaper remarked that the only way to get money into circulation was for the man who had it to exchange it for something else. It further stated that the coinage of silver was not the solution, for the government might buy and coin silver until the treasury vaults should burst with it, and the silver would not circulate.²

The silver issue was a factor of considerable importance in the national campaign of 1892; but Grover Cleveland, the Democratic nominee, was a staunch supporter of sound money and won the election. Those who advocated the free and unlimited coinage of silver, however, did not

1. Ibid., February 4, 1895.

2. Ibid., January 4, 1895, quoted from the Tampa Times.

give up the fight; and in the national campaign of 1896, the silver question was the paramount issue. The campaigns for and against free silver were carried into Alabama and to Marengo County. William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska, a potential candidate for the Democratic nomination, met Richard H. Clarke in a joint debate in Mobile on July 1, 1895. Bryan spoke in behalf of free silver and Clarke for a limited use of silver with the unlimited use of gold. The debate created considerable interest and drew a large attendance.¹

Governor Oates voiced the sentiments of Clarke in the Mobile debate when he said: "There may have been times when free coinage of silver would have been proper, and that time may come again, but it won't do now."²

On the other hand, Senators John T. Morgan and James S. Pugh spoke throughout Alabama in favor of bi-metallism. They spoke in Demopolis Saturday, November 16, 1895, and drew a large crowd of people from Marengo and adjoining counties.³ Many counties and beats in 1895 organized free silver clubs and bi-metallic clubs to agitate for more and cheaper money.⁴

1. Ibid., July 5, 1895.

2. Ibid., August 2, 1895, quoted from the New York Times.

3. The Reform Democrat, November 16, 1895.

4. The Linden Reporter, May 10, 1895. The implication is that there were such clubs in Marengo County. No mention, however, was made of them at this time.

The race for nomination for governor in 1896 lay between Captain Joseph F. Johnston, who had been defeated by William C. Oates in 1894, and Richard H. Clarke of Mobile. Johnston advocated free silver, and Clarke stood for the gold standard.¹

In anticipation of the coming election, Marengo Democrats began to put their house in order for a united effort in behalf of their county and state candidates. The Marengo County Executive Committee met in Linden February 12, 1896, and selected J. J. King Chairman to succeed George Skinner, deceased. The County Democratic Executive Committee approved the action of the state committee which had previously adopted a resolution inviting all conservative voters, irrespective of past political differences, to join in sending delegates to the approaching state convention. The invitation was especially extended to those who wanted economical and constitutional government and who would support the nominees and the principles of the Democratic party. The Marengo County Executive Committee, however, added that the promise of loyalty must be in writing. Before adjournment the committee made a call for a convention of the Democratic party of Marengo to meet at Linden, April 15, 1896, to select delegates to the state convention, to be held in Montgomery, April 20, 1896.²

1. Moore, *op. cit.*, pp. 642-643; Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-171.

2. The Linden Reporter, February 14, 1896.

The call for reunion of all conservative voters was not a hollow gesture for there were well established and active minor party organizations in the county. F. H. Threet, chairman of the Republican Executive Committee of Marengo County, called a mass meeting of the Republicans of the County to meet at Cade's Chapel, April 16, 1896.¹ A similar call had been made by the Populist and Free Silver parties to meet at Linden March 16.²

From the time of the meeting of the County Democratic Executive Committee, February 12, to the convention held April 15, the editors of the county papers conducted an active campaign for the principles of the party as outlined by the county committee. R. R. Poole, Editor of the Marengo Democrat, was especially active. On March 28, he pledged the Marengo Democrat to use every means in its power to maintain white supremacy in Marengo County. To this end, it would endeavor to reunite and unify the factions upon a basis just and honorable to all, irrespective of what candidate for any office was helped or injured thereby. He believed in faithful, efficient, and honest county officers as they were in the election of a governor.³ He did not believe it advisable to require a

1. Ibid., March 20, 1896.

2. Ibid.

3. The Marengo Democrat, March 28, 1896.

written agreement of loyalty from returning Democrats, for "There has never been a time in the history of Marengo County which demanded more prudence, wisdom, and fair dealing than today."¹

In commenting on the political situation on the eve of the convention, the editor of the Reporter said that the politics of Marengo County had been in confusion but that uncertainty no longer existed. There had been no fuss, but the Democracy was lined up and no bluffing would win.²

The county convention met in Linden, April 15, 1896, and made the following nominations: D. J. Meador and D. M. Prowell were nominated by acclamation as candidates for the House of Representatives; Sheriff, P. B. Glass; County Superintendent of Education, W. K. Thomas; county treasurer, W. L. Brasfield; tax collector, Q. S. Adams; tax assessor, J. L. Skinner; coroner, H. H. Archer; county commissioners, C. D. Walker, J. A. Nettles, George A. Kile, and C. H. Miller.³

Delegates sent to the state convention were: S. J. Woolf, John C. Webb, G. B. Wright, J. H. Minge, R. P. Allen, J. A. Nettles, W. B. Glass, W. L. Brasfield, S. L. Strickland, W. H. Allen, John E. Hecker, W. W. Bruce, E. B.

1. Ibid., April 2, 1896.

2. The Linden Reporter, April 3, 1896.

3. Ibid., April 10, 1896.

McCarty, W. C. Harrison, D. J. Meador, Gesner Williams, O. D. Skinner, J. A. Steele, E. C. Dozier, C. N. Johnson,¹ C. E. Allen, and R. W. Smith.

The Populists put a full list of candidates in the field for county officers in Marengo in 1896. They included W. J. Alston and F. J. Griffin for representatives in the state legislature; N. P. Lyles, sheriff; T. S. Lowry, tax collector; A. H. Grayson, tax assessor; E. R. Vaughan, treasurer; W. R. Guinney, county superintendent of education; A. P. Dumas, E. L. Simmons, F. M. Morris, and J. B. Perkins, commissioners.²

The state convention met in Montgomery April 20, 1896, and nominated Captain Joseph F. Johnston for governor and declared in unmistakable language for free silver at the ratio of 16 to 1.³ The followers of Captain Johnston in Marengo were jubilant. The Marengo Democrat wrote: "The Democrat rejoices in the success of its favorite. We believe he is the man for the occasion. His nomination means a happy, reunited, and victorious Democracy."⁴

Johnston faced A. T. Goodwyn of Montgomery, who had been nominated by the Populists and Jeffersonians and was accepted by the Lilly-White Republicans. Goodwyn had been

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., March 20, 1896.

3. Ibid., April 24, 1896; Clark, op. cit., p. 167.

4. The Marengo Democrat, April 23, 1896.

one of the ring-leaders in the Kolb party throughout the heated campaigns of 1890, 1892, and 1894. Some of Kolb's followers had returned to the Democratic fold;¹ some remained in the Populist party; and some merged with the Republican party to support Goodwyn.²

In an appeal for harmony in the Democratic ranks one Marengo editor wrote:

In union there is strength; in division, defeat and disappointment. No battle was ever won by a defeated army; no organization ever succeeded in which unity did not exist.³ A house divided against itself cannot stand.⁴

And in the next issue this editor urged all true Democrats to register, in order to be eligible to vote in the August election and said in part:

...Eternal vigilance is the price of political safety and every Democrat in Marengo knows it. Do not neglect one of your highest duties or forfeit by negligence or indifference your God-given right.⁴

The Clarke men, who represented the conservative element of the Democratic party, adhered closely to the gold standard; but they were loyal to party affiliations and supported the nominee, Joseph F. Johnston. One of them wrote: "It seems to me that the first and greatest

1. Sparkman, op. cit., p. 43.

2. The Linden Reporter, May 1, 1896; Cole, Houston, Populism in Tuscaloosa County, p. 90.

3. The Marengo Democrat, May 14, 1896.

4. Ibid., May 21, 1896.

duty of every Democrat is to register and to vote for Captain Johnston,"¹

In the election of 1896, the Reformers, the Third Party, the People's party or Populists, and the Republicans all combined against the Democrats.² Of this combination, the Clark County Democrat wrote:

The opposition ought to have settled down on a firm name before undertaking to break up the old Democratic house which has been doing business at the old stand for about one hundred years.³

As a result of the election held August 3, 1896, the Democrats were successful in electing every one of their nominees in Marengo County. The following table shows the relative strength of Democrats and other parties combined:

1. The Linden Reporter, May 22, 1896, quoted from a letter written by Eugene McCaa.

2. Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-169; Stealy, *Populism in Birmingham and Jefferson County*, p. 17.

3. The Linden Reporter, June 12, 1896, quoted from Clark County Democrat.

TABLE III

RELATIVE STRENGTH OF DEMOCRATIC PARTY
IN MARENGO COUNTY IN 1896

	No. votes received by each candidate
For Governor:	
Joseph F. Johnston.....	Democrat.....3202
A. T. Goodwyn.....	Populist.....1311
For Sheriff:	
P. B. Glass.....	Democrat.....2799
N. P. Lyles.....	Populist.....1538
For Treasurer:	
W. L. Brasfield.....	Democrat.....2934
E. Vaughn.....	Populist.....1229
For Tax Assessor:	
J. L. Skinner.....	Democrat.....2977
A. H. Grayson.....	Populist.....1258
For Tax Collector:	
C. S. Adams.....	Democrat.....3223
T. S. Lowry.....	Populist.....1040
For County Superintendent of Education:	
W. E. Thomas.....	Democrat.....3054
W. R. Guinney.....	Populist.....1196
For Representatives:	
D. J. Meador.....	Democrat.....2554
D. M. Frowell.....	Democrat.....2719
W. J. Alston.....	Populist.....1229
J. F. Griffin.....	Populist.....1170
C. W. Johnson.....	Populist.....531
For County Commissioners:	
C. H. Miller.....	Democrat.....3083
C. D. Walker.....	Democrat.....2561
G. A. Kile.....	Democrat.....2683
J. A. Nettles.....	Democrat.....2374
A. P. Dumas.....	Populist.....1024
F. M. Morris.....	Populist.....1223
J. D. Perkins.....	Populist.....927
L. L. Simmons.....	Populist.....858

1. Ibid., August 11, 1896.

MAP OF MARENGO COUNTY, ALA.



MAP III ELECTION OF 1896
POPULIST BEATS

A survey of the table shows that in every instance the Democratic ticket won by a handsome majority. The insurgents had been routed and they were slowly to disappear and leave Marengo in the hands of the "Organized Party."

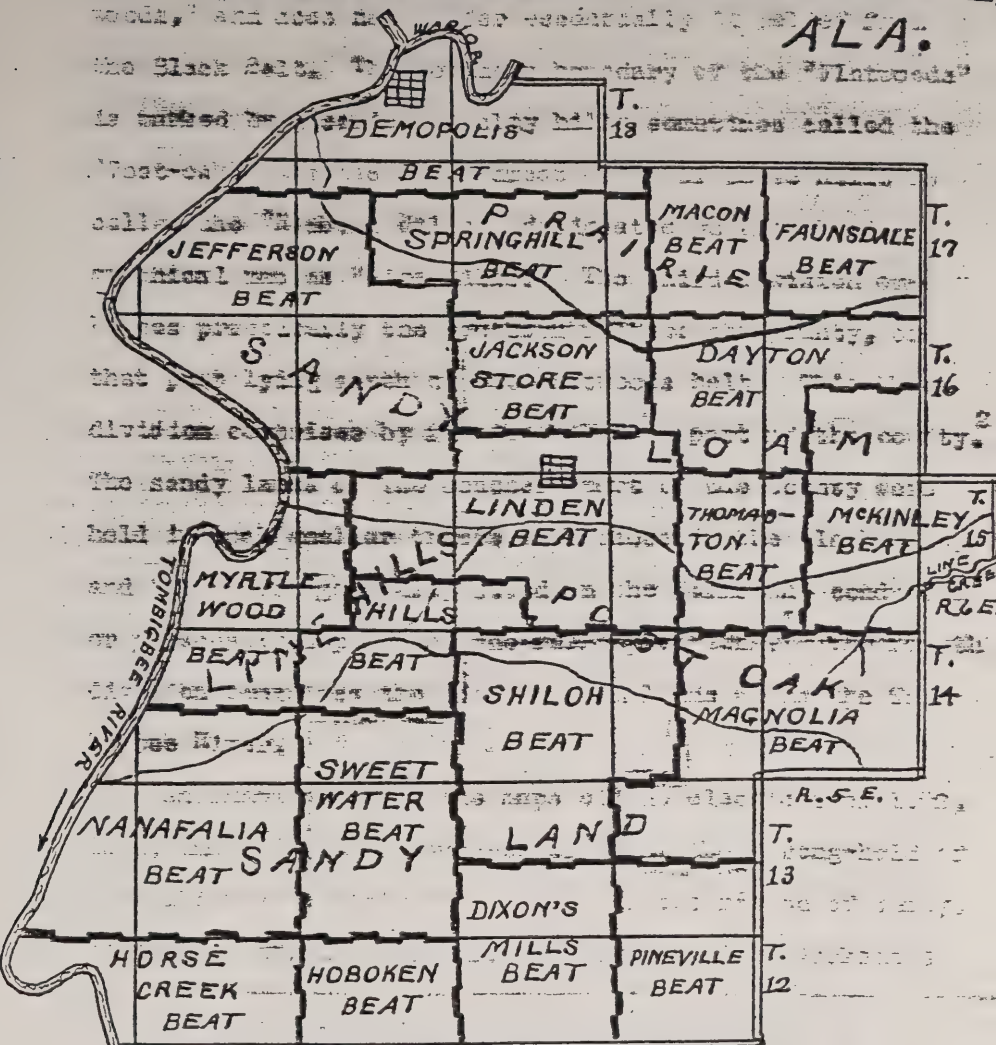
From the election of 1896 to the present time, there has not been a single instance in which the Democratic party has failed to carry every precinct in the county. What caused the farmers of Marengo County to challenge the dominance of the Democrats in the elections of 1892, 1894, and 1896? A definitive answer to this question may not be found for Marengo County, but there are some facts that are worth noting.

In the first place, it is interesting to note the topography of the county in relation to those precincts which gave majorities to Kolb and the Alliance in the elections of 1892, 1894, and 1896. The surface features of Marengo County are variable and can best be described in four divisions. First, the northern end of the county is considered typical "Black Belt" country.¹ The land in this area was held in large tracts by white owners, who generally lived in the villages and had their plantations

1. Phillips, S. W., In Charge, Devereux, R. E., Winston, R. W., McClure, R. W., and Knobel, E. W., Soil Survey of Marengo County, Alabama, United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Soils, p. 555.

MAP OF MARENGO COUNTY

ALA.



R. 1W. R. 1E. R. 2E. R. 3E. R. 4E.

PHYSICGRAPHIC REGIONS OF MARENGO COUNTY AS
GIVEN BY JOEL D. JONES, COUNTY SURVEYOR, FOR
FIFTY YEARS.

MAP IV KOLB BEATS



worked by Negroes under the supervision of an overseer.¹ The second division comprises what is called the "Flatwoods," and does not differ essentially in relief from the Black Belt. The Southern boundary of the "Flatwoods" is marked by a series of clay hills sometimes called the "Post-oak", and the westernmost group of these hills is called the "Rembert Hills", designated on the physiological map as "Line Hills." The third division embraces practically the southern half of the county, or that part lying south of the Flatwoods belt. This third division comprises by far the roughest part of the county.² The sandy lands of the southern part of the county were held in much smaller tracts than those in the Black Belt, and the owners generally lived on the farms and conducted or personally supervised the farm operations.³ The fourth division comprises the river bottom lands along the Tombigbee River.

An examination of the maps of the elections of 1892, 1894, and 1896 shows conclusively that the strong-hold of the Alliance and Kolb support was in the region of sandy, hill land, and small farms. In 1892, Linden, Jackson's

1. Ibid., p. 557.

2. Ibid., p. 556.

3. Ibid., p. 557.

Store, and Jefferson Beats supported Kolb. But a glance at the physiographical map will show that these beats lie within sandy regions. Jackson's Store Beat is especially hilly, rough, and poor; and the population was only 964. Therefore, it seems not unreasonable to say that there is a definite relation between topography and party affili-¹ations in the three elections under consideration.

1. This statement was very definitely supported by Joel D. Jones, for fifty years county surveyor, in conversation with the writer. His statement has been corroborated by other prominent citizens who were participants in these elections.

TABLE IV

Beat	Population ¹		Mortgages 1892 ²
	1890	1900	
Macon	1968	2258	\$19,286
Demopolis	2125	5130	56,405
<u>Jefferson</u> ³	2523	2054	36,424
Spring Hill	2599	1899	19,439
Dayton	2891	3151	69,297
Faunsdale	3020	3575	45,511
McKinley	3173	2129	32,650
<u>Linden</u>	2454	2612	33,124
Hills	1745	1976	6,021
Nanafalia	1050	1333	13,622
<u>Dixons Mills</u>	1148	1237	5,252
<u>Shiloh</u>	2006	2397	8,750
<u>Hampden</u>	933	1536	22,907
<u>Horse Creek</u>	787	777	7,441
<u>Pineville</u>	881	1175	11,703
<u>Sweetwater</u>	1124	1521	12,686
<u>Hoboken</u>	770	843	12,258
<u>Jackson's Store</u>	901	964	12,227
Thomaston	1702	1748	9,727

1. Census Reports, Population, Twelfth Census: 1900, Part I, Vol. 1, p. 6.

2. Mortgage Books, Numbers 52, 52, 53, 54, 55, and 56, 1892, Office of the Judge of Probate, Marengo County, Linden, Alabama.

3. Jefferson and Linden Beats voted for Kolb in 1892, but at no other election; those underscored twice voted two or more times against the "Organized Party."

Some interesting, if not significant, facts are deducible from the above and similar tables. The population of those beats voting against the "Organized Party" was 8550; whereas, those which voted solidly for the Democratic party had a population of 20,273.¹ The total amount of mortgages and crop liens recorded for the Democratic beats was \$277,003; whereas, it was \$93,224 for those beats which voted the Alliance ticket two or more elections. The amount of mortgages per person in Democratic beats was \$13.66; whereas, it was \$10.90 in those that voted Alliance. The total population in 1890 was 25,149; and the total white population was 7,946.² Furthermore the Negro population of the Black Belt, Post-oak, and bottom areas greatly outnumbered that in the third division which was a poorer farming region than the other three regions.³ Finally, since a large part of the population of the northern part of the county was Negroes, the amount of mortgages per white person in that section was far higher than in the white section of the southern part of the county, and therefore, the credit of the whites

1. Linden and Jefferson beats are not counted in either total because they voted for Kolb in 1892 and showed tendencies of supporting both divisions. Also the population of the city of Demopolis was deducted for that was the only place in the county not classed as rural in 1892.

2. Infra., p. 87.

3. Supra., pp. 1-2.

in the Alliance beats was considerably limited. Credit and cheap money were two of the things that the Alliance demanded.

In the absence of the tax assessment of real estate by beats, in the period of 1892-1896, it seems reasonable to state that these sections, voting for Kolb and the Alliance ticket, were economically poorer sections than those that voted for the Democratic ticket. This also is another characteristic of the Alliance movement throughout its history.¹ Those sections needing more credit, cheap money, and government assistance, were supporters of the Alliance; whereas, those sections which had credit and money to meet their needs voted the old party tickets.

Therefore, it seems evident that Kolbism and the Alliance strength in Marengo County to a considerable extent grew out of the economic plight of the people who gave support to the movement.

In the county and state elections of 1892, 1894, and 1896, the Negro vote was a factor in the Democratic and minor party politics. There were those who wanted to debar the Negro from voting. Others wanted an election law similar to that of South Carolina which gave the right to

1. Supra., pp. 2, 4, 5, 6, and 19.

vote to those Negroes who could read and interpret the Constitution. Some Northern newspapers praised the South Carolina law and one said in part "...Intelligence and not ignorance is to be the basis of citizenship."¹ Southern newspapers, particularly the Montgomery Advertiser, took exceptions to the comments of Northern newspapers.

Southern papers felt that the statements were either outright criticisms or would become a basis of attack on the franchise privileges granted to Negroes in the South. The Advertiser asserted that the South could go ahead and do its duty in regard to Negro franchise and that "she (the North) would think all the more of us for it, be more ready to invest here, and to live among us."²

Commenting on the results of the county and state election an editor said that the election in Marengo County was the most hotly contested in many years, and much of the credit for the victory was due to the heroic work of the colored citizens, who repudiated the fusion ticket and boldly worked for the Democrats.³ Direct appeals were made to the Negro voters; their attention was called to promises made by other parties which were never fulfilled. In contrast to these promises, their attention

1. The Linden Reporter, November 8, 1895, quoted from the Record of Chicago.

2. Ibid., quoted from The Montgomery Advertiser.

3. Ibid., August 7, 1896.

was directed to the things done for them by their Democratic friends and direct appeals were made to them to support the hand that fed them.¹

In the primary of August 3, 1896, the Democrats nominated, in every instance, their candidates for the various county offices. It had been equally successful in the state primary.² In the national election, which was to come early in November, the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1 was the chief issue. The Republicans were led by McKinley, the Silver Democrats by William Jennings Bryan, and Gold Democrats by John M. Palmer. The majority of the Populists supported Bryan for President but Thomas E. Watson of Georgia³ was selected as their candidate for Vice-President. In Marengo County, the Democratic nominees experienced strong opposition in the national election, for the Palmer Democrats held a mass meeting at the court house in Linden September 26, 1896, and put out a ticket. The Republicans also organized and got as many Negroes as possible to line up with them.⁴ In Marengo County, in the national election, the Palmer Democrats and Republicans were beaten

1. The Marengo Democrat, October 20, 1896.

2. The Linden Reporter, August 7, 1896.

3. Woodward, C. Vann, Tom Watson Agrarian Rebel, p.

4. The Linden Reporter, October 2, 1896.

without much effort; in the state elections the Democrats were also successful; but in the national election, McKinley was the successful candidate by a large majority.

After the completion of all county and state elections, a general feeling of optimism and self-confidence prevailed in the ranks of the Organized Democrats. One editor again wrote that he was glad to know that the great body of Marengo Democrats, without regard to their views on the money questions, stood faithfully by the nominees and prevented the country from sinking into the throes of Republicanism.¹ Further he said, "There never was a time in the history of the American people when it was more important to know for whom you were voting." And again this same paper wrote that, "We can rest now, assured of peace at home, and good government in Alabama."²

With county, state, and national elections over, Marengo leaders were ready for the affairs of state and county interests. When the legislature of Alabama met in Montgomery in 1897, a very decided effort was made to push through a local bill arranging for the holding of a Circuit Court once each year in Demopolis and once at Linden. Advocates of the bill pointed out that Demopolis was in the

1. The Marengo Democrat, October 8, 1896.

2. Ibid., November 5, 1896.

extreme northern portion of Marengo, so that the long distance and bad roads worked a hardship on those attending court. Should the bill pass, its opponents pointed out, the county would be obliged to have a jail in Demopolis for prisoners, and that records and everything pertaining to court, would of necessity have to be transported to Demopolis for the sessions of court. The bill passed the Senate after having been introduced by Senator Walker. Representative D. J. Meador asked for a few days to determine how the voters of Marengo felt about it. A petition was circulated and more than 1200 of the white citizens of Marengo signed, signifying their opposition. Knowing that the people disapproved, Meador was able to defeat the bill when it came up for passage in the House.¹

The legislature of that year passed a law providing for a Tax Commissioner in every county in Alabama and a State Tax Commissioner to coordinate the work. D. J. Meador of Marengo was chairman of the committee on Ways and Means and assisted in securing the passage of the bill. W. M. Selden was appointed to the newly created office in Marengo.² His work was to cite for a raise those who, he believed, had been listing their valuations too low. In less than a year's time, he had raised the taxable value

1. The Linden Reporter, January 29, 1897.

2. Ibid., March 12, 1897.

of Marengo County property more than \$300,000 and had done his work so quietly that he had not created much friction.¹

Early in 1898, the stage was being set for another political battle. Issues, parties, and candidates were discussed at every cross-roads store and post office. The Reporter early urged harmony in the ranks of the Democratic party when it urged the white people to stand together upon one platform, "Alabama and her peace."²

This appeal evidently did not fall on deaf ears for the Populist party met in Linden on February 6, 1898, and adopted the following resolution: "Resolved, That we enter and take part in the next Democratic primary for Marengo County."³ As indicated by this resolution, there was little opposition to the Democrats in the election of 1898. For governor, Marengo cast just 90 votes against the Democratic nominee. The following men announced for the state legislature from Marengo: for the lower house, J. M. Miller, D. M. Prowell, J. H. George, and R. R. Poole; for the state senate, J. J. King, and D. J. Meador. These men were endorsed by the local paper as regular Democrats.⁴ Most of these men had been prominent in county

1. Ibid., September 24, 1897.

2. Ibid., February 11, 1898.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., February 18, 1898.

politics for several years. Meador had served four terms in the lower house of the state legislature. As will be surmised from the contest in the county convention, each had a considerable following in the county.

With little or no opposition, the Democratic party acted with speed and dispatch. This is evidenced by the nearness of the meetings of the governing bodies of the county and state party organizations. The County Executive Committee was called by the chairman to meet April 9, the county convention April 15, and the state convention, April 20.¹

When the county convention assembled, it had the task of nominating candidates for the state senate, house of representatives, probate judge, selection of the executive committee for the county, and delegates to the State Democratic Convention, which was scheduled to meet in Montgomery April 20, 1898.

The nomination of a state senator was the first item of business and developed into a spirited contest. Miss Walker, the incumbent, J. J. King, and D. J. Meador were the candidates. For a time, the convention was deadlocked. After the eighth ballot, the count stood: Meador, 56; King, 24; Walker, 27. A motion was made to drop the name of the lowest candidate after the next bal-

1. The Linden Reporter, April 1, 1898.

lot. There was considerable discussion as to whether the dropped candidate's strength should be prorated; but this was finally voted out. J. J. King's name was withdrawn and on the final ballot the vote stood: Meador, 53; Walker, 34; hence, Meador received the nomination.¹ R. R. Poole and J. M. Miller were nominated without much discussion for representatives in the lower house.

The selection of a nominee for probate judge was also rather troublesome. The three candidates were: S. P. Prowell, William L. Brasfield and William Cunningham. After thirteen ballots, the strength of the candidates being about equally divided, the names of S. B. Jackson was also placed before the convention. This did not help matters; and after the 16th ballot it was moved to withdraw the names of two candidates with the smaller number of votes. Again discussion as to prorating the strength of these candidates followed, but the delegates did not approve of proration. The names of Jackson and Brasfield were withdrawn, and on the last ballot Prowell received 46 votes and Cunningham 41 votes. Prowell was thus nominated.

That the county convention made some wise choices for the state legislature is evidenced by the fact that all were given important places as chairmen or members of

1. Ibid., April 22, 1898.

important committees. Meador was made chairman of the Committee on Finance and Taxation in the Senate of 1898. He had already been chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means in the house. He was also a member of the Committee on Agriculture.¹ In the house,⁴ Poole was made chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and a member of the Ways and Means Committee and Local Legislative Committee. Miller did not get the chairmanship of a committee but was a member of the Judiciary, Public Buildings, and Institutes committees.²

The matter of selection of delegates to the state convention and of members of the Democratic Executive Committee for the county was not troublesome and was soon dispensed with. The delegates to the convention at Montgomery were as follows: D. J. Meador, C. E. Miller, S. R. Bethea, T. J. Jackson, Ben. F. Elmore, J. S. Grigg, R. R. Poole, O. Brame, W. A. Wooten, W. J. Lewis, and T. J. Bettis. The members of the County Executive Committee who were to serve two years were as follows:

Bradford's Store	J. A. Bradford
Dayton	O. Brame
Demopolis	E. B. McCarty
Dixons Mills	W. R. Dixon
Feunnsdale	J. H. Dollins, Jr.

1. Ibid., November 25, 1898.

2. Ibid., November 25, 1898.

Hamden	T. S. Lowry
Hills	T. J. Jackson
Hoboken	J. A. Hasty
Horse Creek	S. F. Bates
Jefferson	C. B. Whitfield
Jackson's Store	R. C. Ballou
Linden	John E. Hecker
Macon	T. W. Poole
McKinley	R. C. Wooten
Nanafalia	J. B. Williams
Nixons	C. B. Thomas
Pineville	W. J. Smyly
Shiloh	C. H. Miller
Sweetwater	W. J. Lewis ¹

Before final adjournment, the county convention instructed the delegates to vote for W. H. Tayloe for chancellor and for John C. Anderson for judge. The senators and representatives were instructed to support Ben F. Elmore of Demopolis for circuit solicitor. The convention resolved to make nominations in the future by a white primary, and finally it endorsed the administration of Governor Joseph F. Johnston.²

When the state convention assembled April 20, 1898,

1. The Linden Reporter, April 22, 1898.

2. Ibid.

it found little to do as practically all of the candidates for major offices were unopposed. Joseph F. Johnston was nominated for another term. The opposition to the Democratic party in Alabama had so nearly vanished that the general election in August created scarcely a ripple of excitement. Nomination by a Democratic convention had become almost tantamount to election. G. D. Deans of Shelby County, the Populist opponent of Johnston for governor, received only 90 votes to Johnston's 1735 in Marengo in August 1898. There was not a single nominee by the Democratic party for a county office opposed by any candidates. The highest vote in the county in opposition to a Democratic nominee was registered against John W. Abercrombie who was in the race for state superintendent of education. His two opponents secured only 124 votes.¹ George W. Taylor of Demopolis was reelected to Congress from the First District.

For several years there had been considerable agitation for a constitutional convention to frame a new constitution for Alabama. Finally the convention was called by the legislature, and Marengo County set about naming delegates early in 1899. The burning question before the people of Marengo was the selection of represent-

1. Ibid., August 12, 1898.

atives to this convention. At once, there came a demand for the selection of "the ablest, wisest, and truest men" for these places.¹ Marengo leaders were in accord with the sentiments of the Marion Standard which wrote, "Political honor should be put aside for less important occasions, and none but the wisest and most learned should be selected."² The suggestion was made and endorsed³ by the leading newspapers that the state's ex-governors, Jones and Oates, should be sent to the constitutional convention. Several prominent Marengo men were mentioned to represent the county in such a constitutional convention. Most favorable mention was made of William E. Clarke, D. J. Meador, John H. Minge, and James M. Miller.⁴

The Marengo County Convention met in Linden, March 22, 1899, to select three delegates to the constitutional convention and eleven delegates to the state convention.⁵ Judge William Cunningham was nominated by acclamation to represent the county at large. John H. Minge, William E. Clarke, and J. M. Miller were the other three candidates from whom two were to be selected. On the first ballot, Minge and Clarke were chosen. Delegates to

1. Ibid., January 6, 1899.

2. Ibid., February 3, 1899.

3. Ibid., January 13, 1899, quoted from the Montgomery Advertiser.

4. Ibid., January 6, and February 24, 1899; The Marengo Democrat, January 26, 1899.

5. The Linden Reporter, March 21, 1899.

the state convention were appointed as follows: T. J. Jackson, F. G. Stickney, E. B. McCarty, D. C. Moseley, P. B. Glass, John J. King, William Grant, C. B. Whitfield, George F. Nichols, and W. M. Selden. The following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That it is the sense of this convention that in the event of a new constitution being framed for this state provision shall be made for its submission to the people for ratification or rejection before, it can become the organized law of the state.¹

The State Democratic Executive Committee met in Montgomery April 21, 1899, and went on record as approving the constitutional convention.² Just a few days later the Marengo Executive Committee met and approved the action of the state committee.³

Considerable opposition grew up in the State to the calling of such a convention. In response to a circular letter sent out by the governor, three chief grounds of opposition were found, namely, it would cause serious division in the party; it would be opposed and voted against by loyal Democrats; and if it should fail, it would seriously damage the party.⁴ Acting on this information, an extra session of the legislature repealed the

1. *Ibid.*, March 24, 1899.

2. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1899.

3. *Ibid.*, May 5, 1899.

4. *Ibid.*, April 14, 1899, quoted from letter written by Joseph F. Johnston.

call for a convention.¹ The Marengo delegation divided on the question of repealing the act for calling the convention. Miller stood with the repealists, but Poole and Meador opposed repeal.¹ However, this only delayed two years a constitutional convention; for in 1901 Alabama adopted a new constitution which practically disfranchised the Negro.²

One of the chief aims of political leaders was to merge completely all divergent factions of the Democratic party. This became a genuine necessity as a preparation for white supremacy under the tutelage of the Democratic party. This partly accounts for the repeal of the call for the constitutional convention. That this was evident in the minds of the leaders in Marengo is demonstrated by the inclusion of a resolution of the county convention April 13, 1898, providing for making all future nominations by white primaries. Strong editorials and letters in the county papers indicate a degree of intensity and determination not often found in county politics.³ In the solution of the problem of the Negro vote, the advice of nationally known Alabama political figures was sought. These leaders responded, among them Congressman Oscar W. Underwood from the Ninth District:

1. *Ibid.*, May 12, 1899.

2. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 654.

3. Marengo Democrat, September 9, 1899, quoted from letter written by W. R. Quinney; *Ibid.*, January 26, 1899.

The right of suffrage is at the foundation of our government. When the power of the ballot is given to unfit or unscrupulous men, it will end in corruption, produce bad laws, dishonest legislation and a corrupt judiciary...The Aryan race is the only race that has ever known the art of self-government. They have never bowed to the domination of an inferior race and never will. As long as present conditions remain, you will not see anything but the Solid South. No political question will ever become more dominant than the right of self-government.¹

After having been nominated by a white primary according to the convention resolution of April 13, 1898,² the following men were elected to the various offices of Marengo County in the election of 1900:

Sheriff	Alonzo L. Hasty
Tax Collector	Q. S. Adams
County Treasurer	W. L. Brasfield
Tax Assessor	Tom Grayson
Superintendent of Education	C. T. Saunders
Coroner	Herbert Carter

The nominees to the lower house of the legislature were S. J. Woolf and J. B. Williams, who were instructed to vote for John T. Morgan for the United States Senate. R. R. Poole was endorsed for Commissioner of Agriculture. Delegates to the state convention were: George W. Taylor, T. F. Howze, W. M. Selden, D. J. Meador, Dr. D. C. Moseley, J. E. Winge, Dr. J. E. Jones, W. A. Skinner, and Ben F. Elmore.

1. Ibid., March 2, 1900, quoted from letter written by Oscar W. Underwood.

2. The Linden Reporter, April 22, 1898.

Of this entire group, only two are prominent in the political circles of the county today. A. L. Hasty was appointed high deputy sheriff in 1896, and was elected sheriff in this election. He has been probate judge for the past thirty years, and is considered today the most influential political figure in the county. The other, Ben F. Elmore, has been connected with the political destinies of the county since before this election and is today Circuit Judge for the district of which Marengo is a part.

CHAPTER III

THE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF MARENGO COUNTY
FROM 1890 to 1900

Marengo County from early settlement to the present time has been primarily an agricultural county. It possesses much rich land which is well adapted to crops and grazing. Another evidence of the agricultural economy of the county was the prevalence of slavery to 1865 and, since early settlement, the Negro population has outnumbered the whites about three to one.¹ Marengo County has few natural resources other than its rich lands. It had some timber, but it has long since been depleted almost to the vanishing point.

It will be the purpose of this narrative to give attention to whatever manufacturing that developed or existed from 1890 to 1900, to the agricultural situation, banking and credit facilities, transportation and communication developments, and to other incidental enterprises.

In the period of this study, Marengo had some enterprises classed as manufacturing. In 1890 there were seven manufacturing establishments, employing 21 people, or an

1. Census reports for the period 1830 to 1930 show that the range was from nearly 3 to 1 in 1830 to a little over 2½ to one in 1930. See table page 98.

average of three per establishment. These seven establishments had a total capitalization of only \$9,300, or \$1,328¹ per establishment. Marengo has been a great cotton and timber county, consequently, manufacturing establishments have been primarily cotton gins and the small timber industries. The papers of the county for the decade do not carry any advertisements of any other type of business. An inquiry among the older citizens of the county revealed that other forms of manufacturing had been done in the county in the period of this study.

Probably the largest establishment to develop was the Alabama Cotton Oil Company, first organized as the American Cotton Oil Company. This plant employed approximately twenty-five men. The Leader Oil Company, also of Demopolis, constituted a prosperous concern, even though smaller than the Alabama Cotton Oil Company. Both plants continued to do a prosperous business for a number of years after the period 1890-1900. John C. Webb and Son, beginning originally as John C. Webb, had a thriving ginnery and compress. The compress business has been given up and in its place, the company has developed an extensive warehouse business along with a modern ginnery. This firm has been in business approximately fifty years, and remains a leading business of its kind in the county

1. Census Reports, Manufacturing, Eleventh Census: 1890, Part I, Vol. VI, pp. 338-339.

at the present time.

Some development of the lumber business occurred in this period. Two of the largest lumber mills developed at Demopolis. The Black Warrior Lumber Company operated in the period 1890-1900 and still does, though the timber supply is decreasing rapidly. Another mill under the name Mitchell-Kirven Lumber Company sawed lumber for a long time, but has discontinued now. No evidence has been found to indicate the amount of lumber manufactured periodically or the number of employees.

The plantation sawmill, grist mill, and gin which supplied little more than local needs were scattered throughout the county. Except in Demopolis, no record of any other type of manufacturing existed.

Reports and records indicate that Marengo was fairly prosperous during the period as a whole, but fail to give the wage scale. All records that might give this information have been either destroyed or escaped the attention of the writer, and the older citizens cannot give much additional help.¹

However, the county made some gains in the decade following 1890. In 1900, the number of manufacturing establishments had grown from seven to eighty. The total

1. This information on manufacturing in Marengo was furnished the writer through conversations with Judge Ben F. Elmore and Judge H. A. Herbert of Demopolis and substantiated by other older citizens of that city and elsewhere in the county.

capitalization in 1900 amounted to \$440,619, or about \$5507 per establishment, whereas in 1890 the total capitalization had been \$9,296, an average of approximately \$1328 per establishment. The industries in 1890 employed an average of three men per establishment, while those in 1900 averaged 5.25 wage earners per establishment.¹ Industry made a significant gain, but the total amount was not impressive at the beginning or the end of the period here considered.

In the decade the products of the farm brought in the largest income. Of the farm products, cotton was by far the greatest single source of income. For several decades previous to 1900, there had been a steady increase in the number of acres devoted to cotton, and of the number of bales produced. Another trend must not be overlooked: the diminution of the acreage of the farms. These facts can be had at a glance from the following tables.

1. Census Reports; Manufacturing, Twelfth Census: 1900, Vol. VIII, Part II, p. 8.

TABLE V
COTTON ACREAGE

Year	Acreage
1880	80,790 ¹
1890	94,080 ²
1900	107,979 ³

TABLE VI
COTTON PRODUCTION (BALES)

Years	Bales
1880	23,481 ⁴
1890	31,651 ⁵
1900	32,911 ⁶

TABLE VII
SIZE OF FARMS

Size in Acres	1880	1890	1900
Over 1000 acres	88	96	40
500 to 1000 acres	137	113	81
100 to 500 acres	638 ⁷	653 ⁸	797 ⁹
Less than 100 acres	1945 ⁷	2712 ⁸	4670 ⁹

1. Census Reports, Agriculture, Tenth Census: 1880, Vol. VI, pp. 121-122.
 2. Ibid., Eleventh Census: 1890, Vol. V, p. 393.
 3. Ibid., Twelfth Census: 1900, Vol. V, Part II, p. 450.
 4. Ibid., Tenth Census: 1880, Vol. VI, p. 122.
 5. Ibid., Eleventh Census: 1890, Vol. V, p. 393.
 6. Ibid., Twelfth Census: 1900, Vol. V, Part II, p. 450.
 7. Ibid., Tenth Census: 1880, Vol. VIII, p. 30.
 8. Ibid., Eleventh Census: 1890, Vol. V, p. 120.
 9. Ibid., Twelfth Census: 1900, Vol. V, Part I, p. 58.

The production of over thirty thousand bales of cotton by nearly nine thousand white population¹ is rather large. This is a production of 3,733 bales per white person in the county in 1900. In the same year, the average number of bales per white person in Alabama was 1.082; and in the six leading cotton producing states the number was only 1,116 bales per white person.² The high production of cotton in the county is due to several factors. For one thing, Marengo still operated on the plantation basis, using large amounts of Negro labor. In the year 1900, the Negro population numbered 29,474 and the whites only 8841; whereas, in the state as a whole the whites outnumbered the Negroes by a ratio of 174 to 92.

Very few Negroes owned their farms in this period. The great increase in acreage and production in Marengo was beginning to be typical of the South as a whole. Hence, prices were depressed. Often cotton sold for as little as five cents per pound and sometimes even less. Individuals and farmers' organizations began to look for a way to avoid depressed prices. They sought credit in Europe with which to hold cotton off the market, and per-

91. 1. For population of Marengo County in 1900, see p.

2. Census Reports, Population, Twelfth Census: 1900, Part II, Vol. II, pp. 256-300; *Ibid.*, Agriculture, Part II, Vol. V, p. 423; in this connection it was interesting to note that it required three acres to produce a bale in Marengo in 1890 and three and three-tenths, in 1900.

fecting plans for acreage reduction. In 1890, the state Farmers' Alliance made an arrangement with a syndicate of European capitalists to advance \$32 per bale on two million bales of cotton at a yearly interest of four per cent. Prominent cotton men predicted that the withdrawal of this amount of cotton from the market would advance the price of cotton to twelve or thirteen cents per pound in a year.¹ It was also thought that if the Farmers' Alliance could arrange to hold the cotton it would be better than committing the government to the policy of getting a corner on the necessities of life.² Crop reduction was urged on the farmers by the Cotton Growers Association. Its President, Hector D. Lane, made an appeal to county and local groups in behalf of reduction and warned them that three-cent cotton the next year would mean a general crash.³

Marengo leaders were not slow to see the advisability of crop reduction. They pointed out that the cotton market would remain low as long as production exceeded the demand. They urged the farmers to reduce the acreage by one-third. This would insure a better price for cotton, more money in the farmer's hands, and additional acreage to raise other farm products.⁴ These leaders

1. The Linden Reporter, September 10, 1890, quoted from The Montgomery Advertiser.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., February 22, 1895, quoted from letter written by Hector D. Lane.

4. Ibid., September 26, 1894.

called attention to the fact that the crop of 1895 aggregated the enormous total of 9,901,251 bales, (Marengo's production was about 30,000 bales) and greatly exceeded the demands of the world's manufactures of cotton products.¹

In the late nineties, the farmers seemed to have adopted, to some extent, the plan of acreage reduction, and the growing of home supplies. One farmer in the autumn of 1897 had, for example, provided himself with 2298 pounds of pork prepared from ten hogs. Commenting on this and other similar occurrences, the Reporter pointed out that Marengo would send out of the county less money for supplies that year than any since the Civil War. It pointed out, furthermore, that if this policy were continued, the prosperity of the farmer would be insured and one would not hear of hard times any more.²

In their efforts to keep cotton off the market by acreage reduction and holding for a better market, the Marengo farmers had the cooperation of Marengo business men. John C. Webb of Demopolis advanced money on cotton throughout the nineties, thus preventing the necessity of throwing it on the market too rapidly. In the autumn of 1897, Louis Toward of Mobile, a reliable cotton man,

1. Marengo Democrat, January 9, 1896, quoted from a Memphis Cotton Exchange.

2. The Linden Reporter, January 31, 1897.

offered to advance twenty dollars a bale on cotton sent him, and to hold it until the following spring. Many Marengo farmers took advantage of one or the other of these offers.¹

The efforts put forth by the farmers and farm leaders had convinced the farmers of the value of holding cotton and achieving acreage reduction to boost the price of cotton on the market. They had come to see also that it took an undue amount of transportation to carry the raw products to New England and then to ship the finished product back. They came to believe, at least some of the advanced ones did, that an increase in the price of cotton would bring the cotton manufacturers closer to the fields of production, in order to eliminate as much of the costs of transportation as possible.² The farm leaders pointed out those countries were most prosperous which manufactured their own raw materials. Marengo leaders were not slow to fall in line.³ It was further pointed out that climate, taxes, and competition were factors which were already bringing Northern and Eastern mills in-
to the South.⁴

Marengo papers were continually doing all they could

1. Ibid., December 10, 1897.

2. Ibid., September 28, 1899, quoted from The Nashville American.

3. The Marengo Democrat, September 14, 1899.

4. Ibid., November 2, 1899, quoted from the Montgomery Journal.

to coax textile manufacturing into Marengo County, but to the present time no textile industry has located in that county. It was also a policy of the leading papers of the county to invite immigration into the county, but in 1900 Marengo had only 76 people of foreign birth.¹ Immigrants had, however, come into Marengo from other parts of the United States, and their description of the fertility of the soil, the cheapness of the land, and other favorable circumstances favored immigration.²

The campaign for reduction of cotton acreage seemed to have had some beneficial results. The farmers turned their attention to raising diversified crops and live stock.³

Some idea of the value and number of farm animals in Marengo County in 1900 may be obtained from a study of the following tables. This also is an indication of diversification.

1. Ibid., January 23, 1896.

2. The Linden Reporter, August 14, 1896, quoted from letter written by R. P. Sommerhaup to Hore and Farm.

3. Ibid., January 31, 1897. The importance which these features had attained is showed in the table page 85 from the census reports for 1900.

TABLE VIII
FARM ANIMALS IN MARENGO COUNTY IN 1900¹

Kind	Number
Meat animals	20,286
Dairy cows	6,274
Horses and mules (over 2 yrs. old)	8,058
Sheep- all ages	2,293
Goats	3,017

TABLE IX
VALUE OF FARM ANIMALS IN MARENGO
IN 1900²

Value of domestic animals	\$881,930
Received from sale of animals	36,631
Value of animals used at home	75,254

1. Census Reports, Agriculture, Twelfth Census:
1900, Vol. V, Part II, p. 431.
2. Ibid.

TABLE X
FARM PRODUCTS IN MARENGO COUNTY 1900¹

Name of Product	Number Acres	Amounts		
		Bushels	Tons	Pounds Gallons
Corn	46,873	197,535		
Oats	1,030	23,535		
Rye	1	10		
Wheat	6	50		
Rice	91			26,340
Prairie Grass hay	70		65	
Millet and Hungarian grasses	2		2	
Alfalfa	40		58	
Clover	44		44	
Other tame grasses	670		1410	
Green grains for hay	78		139	
Forage	125		125	
Corn stalks			1762	
Irish potatoes	95	61,146		
Sweet potatoes		91,943		
Other vegetables	1110	42,354		
Sugar cane	684		9	
Sugar cane syrup				40,424
Sugar				300
Sorghum	145			10,187
Tobacco	6			1220
Beans	1	19		
Peas	1044	10,655		
Peanuts	175	2,469		
Broom corn	1			20
Apples		2,762		
Cherries		24		
Peaches		2,579		
Pears		677		

1. Census Reports, Agriculture, Twelfth Census:
1900, Vol. V.

Cotton still held a very important place in the agricultural and economic life of the county in 1900. That year Marengo County farmers planted 107,979 acres of cotton and raised 32,911 bales. The value of all property in the county at the close of the period studied was \$5,447,712. At the beginning of the decade, the value of all property had been estimated at \$3,181,515. This was an increase of \$2,266,197,¹ a reasonable increase in value, and indicates considerable prosperity.

The great increases in cotton acreage, total bales produced, and the number of the small farms must not be taken as an indication that the farmers of Marengo County did a cash business. In 1899, 222 farms were under a mortgage to the amount of \$150,729, or an average of about \$3.60 per acre for the amount mortgaged.² This does not include the crop liens given by the farmers to their merchants for advances to make the crops. That amount will probably never be known. The question is at once raised as to how the farmers secured credit.

At least three possible sources of credit existed in that period. Probably the best known and most widely used was the merchant who advanced some money and many

1. Census Reports, Agriculture, Eleventh Census: 1890, Vol. V, Part II, p. 434.

2. Census Reports, Real Estate Mortgages, Eleventh Census: 1890, Vol. XII, p. 330.

supplies to the farmer, and took the well-known crop-lien on the crop, which the farmer hoped to raise and deliver in the autumn. This system was the Nemesis of the farmer, but he could hardly find any way to escape it. Only the study of plantation accounts can give any adequate idea of the amounts involved in these yearly transactions. This study would be only approximate, for most of the records have been destroyed or are not available for study.

Loans made by individuals, acting as agents of financial institutions, located outside the state, usually in New York City, furnished a second source. In the late winter and spring, the county papers carried advertisements of these agents, usually represented by a local attorney, offering loans on good farm lands. Many advertisements can be found in these papers over such familiar names as Ben F. Elmore and John C. Anderson. The amount involved in this type of loan no doubt was considerable.¹

Another source of credit for farming and other enterprises was the banks of the county. The first permanent institution of this type, The Robertson Banking Company, was established in Demopolis in 1870 and has been one of the leading banks of the county up to the present time.²

1. The Linden Reporter, March 19, 1894, and other issues too numerous to mention.

2. The Demopolis Times, "Industrial Number", October 13, 1910.

The second permanent banking institution of the county, The First National Bank of Demopolis, secured a charter July 28, 1890. John S. Hanly of Tuscaloosa was elected president; Jacob Marx of Demopolis, vice-president; and James W. Taylor of Linden, cashier.¹ These banking institutions have been the strongest in the county from their founding. A third bank was established in Faunsdale before 1900. It is the oldest continuous business in this little prairie town. John F. Watkins came to Faunsdale in 1876 and opened a mercantile business as John F. Watkins and Company; and, in 1891, he incorporated the Watkins Mercantile and Banking Company as a successor to the first-named firm. In 1893, the bank sold out the mercantile part of the business to Coleman and Walker but did not change the charter name of the bank until 1906 when it dropped the term Mercantile and changed the name of the corporation to Watkins Banking Company. Under the last name, the firm is still doing a prosperous business. Mims Walker served as the first president of this bank and John F. Watkins, general manager. Both these men died in 1903.² Since 1900 three other banks have been established: one at Linden, one at Thomaston,

1. The Linden Reporter, January 30, 1891.

2. Letter written by Siddons Stollenwerk to Miss Lena Lockhart, July 23, 1937.

and one at Sweetwater." All have been maintained on a sound basis, but the capital stock, surplus, and deposits of none of these have approached that of the Demopolis banks. The officers of these banks have managed them well. Not a single bank has failed in Marengo County since 1870, the time of the founding of the Robertson Banking Company of Demopolis.¹

Demopolis not only led in industrial and financial development, but also led in population growth² and other civic activities.³ By 1895, the city had water works and an electric light plant had been projected.⁴ It was long after 1900 before any other town in the county secured these facilities. It was for these improvements that the first bond issue in the county was floated. Demopolis issued bonds to the amount of \$8,000 with which to complete the above-mentioned improvements.⁵

Large harvests of farm products and a reasonable extension of credits were good measures of the prosperity of a county, but another very good measure was advancement in the extent and efficiency of the systems of communication and transportation. In the nineties, Marengo

1. Conversation with John G. Alston, Magnolia, Alabama, verified by letter written by Siddons Stollenwerck to Miss Lena Lockhart, July 23, 1937.

2. Census Reports, Population, Eleventh Census: 1890, Vol. 1, Part I, p. 57.

3. The Linden Reporter, November 15, 1895.

4. Ibid.

5. Information relative to this bond issue was given to the writer by the Mayor of Demopolis, M. C. Floyd.

County gave much attention to this phase of her economic development. Telephone lines connected Linden, Demopolis,¹ Marion, and Uniontown in the early nineties. A new telephone line connecting Linden with Thomasville, Nicholsville, Sweetwater, Miller's Store, and Octagon was completed in the spring of 1897.²

The rivers remained the main arteries of travel. Large boats plied the Tombigbee and Alabama rivers on regular weekly schedules, thus affording Marengo an outlet from Demopolis to the Gulf. Rambert's Beckley's, and Nanafalia³ were important regular stops. The greater part of the transportation for cotton, cattle, hogs, and other products, was either by way of Demopolis or Thomasville to Mobile. Not only farmers and merchants were anxious for better and quicker communication with the outside world, but also the ladies were agitating for a place where they could shop with greater satisfaction.

Great interest was manifested in obtaining railroad connection with the outside world. At the request of the people of Marengo County, Charles Lenoir, a leading business man of Selma, made an inspection trip through the county in 1896 in the interest of the extension of the

1. The Linden Reporter, April 9, 1897.

2. Ibid., April 9, 1897.

3. Ibid., January 24, 1890.

Martin Station road to ~~Linden~~. He was urged to meet the directors of the road and have it extended at least into the county.¹

Marengo County was not the only county interested in the extension westward of the Martin Station division of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. One man wrote that he was interested in the westward extension to the Tombigbee River, for when it was built there, it would finally be extended into Choctaw County.² The Choctaw Herald added: "Let everybody go to work in earnest to get the road from Martin's Station to Linden and on through Choctaw County."³ The value to Marengo of this railroad seemed to have been calculated by the Reporter when it said, "The road would do Marengo more good than forty wagon loads of 'free silver.'"⁴

Two New York capitalists from Wall Street visited Linden, December 8, 1896, in the interest of the extension of the road. A general spirit of optimism prevailed. After months of discussion in Linden and Selma, a meeting of Marengo County citizens, interested in the project, was called to assemble in Linden. This meeting assembled Saturday, July 3, 1897, at the court house with the in-

1. Ibid., May 22, 1896, quoted from letter written by Charles Lenoir to Selma Times Journal.

2. Ibid., June 19, 1896.

3. Ibid., quoted from the Choctaw Herald.

4. Ibid., July 3, 1896.

tention "To do something about getting connection with the balance of the world."¹ Two committees were appointed by this meeting; an executive committee, consisting of Eugene McCaa, William Cunningham, and Garland Kirven; and a subscription committee composed of C. B. Wooten of McKinley, C. B. Thomas of Thomaston, P. B. Glass of Linden, A. C. Thomas of Hills and D. J. Meador of Myrtlewood. The following resolution was also adopted:

Resolved, That we propose to build or help build a railroad from Bigbee River through Linden to Selma; and the Martin Station route appears to be the most feasible; but we do not commit ourselves to any company.²

At a meeting of the executive committee on August 7, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad had representatives present. When the meeting adjourned, they gave out a statement to the effect that, "We have come to an agreement with the railroad people of Selma and we are confident that the road from Martin's Station will be completed in a short time."³ This was to be known as the Selma to New Orleans route, and since it was to go by way of Myrtlewood, it would give Marengo direct communication

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1. Ibid., July 9, 1896.
 2. Ibid., July 9, 1897.
 3. Ibid., August 13, 1897.

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with Selma and Montgomery. Many of Marengo's leaders took an active part in securing the extension of this road, but no one was more active and influential than John C. Anderson.²

While plans were going forward for a railroad from east to west through the county, efforts were also being made to get a railroad from Demopolis through Marengo and on south to Pensacola. An important meeting of interested parties was held in Linden in the spring of 1899. A group of New York business men became interested and had contracted to complete 110 miles from deep water on the Tombigbee to some point in Tuscaloosa County. Committees were appointed and donations sought which were to be paid when the first train arrived in Linden. The company agreed to have the road completed to Linden by January 1, 1901. More than \$4,000 was subscribed by various individuals. The Reporter noted that "The people in this section stand ready at all times to do all in their power to help any movement that will give them a railroad."³

A declaration of incorporation of the Demopolis and Pensacola Railroad was filed in the office of Secretary

1. Ibid., May 8, 1897.

2. Ibid. When a new railroad is projected into a community, a "boom" usually follows. To some degree, at least, Marengo was no exception. The State held some 4256 acres of land for taxes. This land was now put on the market and every acre sold, thus putting Marengo's 614,000 acres in the hands of individuals.

3. Ibid., April 7, 1899.

of State February 1, 1898.¹ John C. Webb, John R. Robertson, Morris Mayer, John C. Anderson, Ben F. Elmore, Thomas F. Howze, and William H. Welch were the incorporators. The road extended through Marengo, Clark, Monroe, and Escambia counties in Alabama and Santa Rosa County in Florida.²

Travel by rail being assured in the near future, efforts concentrated on the public roads. For some years, a change in the system of working the roads had been urged. On February 21, 1899, the legislature of Alabama passed a law concerning the roads of Marengo, a summary of which follows:

1. A supervisor of roads for Marengo County was to be elected by the Court of County Commissioners for a term of 12 months.
2. The salary was not to exceed \$800 and he was required to be a practical engineer.
3. His duties were:
 - a. to supervise all road work in the county;
 - b. to locate all new roads to be established;
 - c. to build and keep bridges in repair.
4. All able-bodied men between 18 and 45 years of age were required to work 8 days a year on the roads or pay \$4 in lieu of the work.³

Neither the projected railroads nor public roads were at once built. Farmers and merchants had to depend on the only means at hand to move enormous cotton crops. This was a problem of gigantic size. The Farmers' Al-

1. Ibid., February 11, 1898.

2. This projected road was not completed until 1926 as a part of the Frisco system.

3. Ibid., March 31, 1899.

liance had met defeat in politics, but the organization was not unmindful of its members and their economic welfare. The Marengo County Alliance secured the services of a boat to ply the Tombigbee River carrying its cargo¹ to Demopolis or Mobile according to the demand.

The system of merchandising in Marengo in the period 1890-1900 was probably not different from that of any other part of the state. Reference has already been made to the fact that the local merchant furnished needed economic support to a large part of the population in the form of advances by the merchant to the farmer in return for which the farmer gave a lien on the future crop.² A general store existed within reach --though sometimes a long reach-- of every farmer.

The most outstanding merchandising enterprises were found in Demopolis. In fact, a perusal of the advertisements in the county papers of the period reveals that the Demopolis merchants were the only ones advertising in the newspapers. Some of these firms developed in the early post-Civil War period. The Bailey Drug Company opened its doors in 1865 or 1866. The same was true of the Braswell Hardware Company. Both these concerns are now doing a profitable business in Demopolis. The Southern Grocery Company was a prosperous enterprise in the nineties

1. Ibid., October 10, 1897.

2. Supra., p. 79.

and is now operated as the Merchants Grocery Company. The department store in Marengo had its foundation laid long before the period under consideration. Mayer Brothers opened their doors to the public in 1866 and are doing a very successful business at the present time. It is one of the largest concerns in that section of the State.¹

In different parts of the county, one is surprised to find that the original or a descendent of the original proprietor of a thriving country store is still doing business at the same place. For instance, at Magnolia, C. W. Agee continues the business formerly owned by his father, Lucian Agee, and uncle, Isam Agee. At Sweetwater, the Lewis's have been in the mercantile business as far back as any account can be found. In the nineties, Sam Skinner had a very successful mercantile business at Shiloh when that community was the center of an active and prosperous agricultural enterprise. Skinner continued his business successfully until about 1920.

1. The information relative to mercantile business in Pemopolis was derived from newspaper advertisements, billboard advertisements, and conversation with old citizens, including the present owners of Braswell Hardware Company, and Bailey Drug Company.

CHAPTER IV

A SKETCH OF THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY
OF MARENGO COUNTY FROM 1890 TO 1900

The cultural and social history of any locality reflects primarily the type of people inhabiting that area. The first large scale settlement within the present limits of Alabama was made by the French Vine and Olive Company, composed of a portion of the exiled followers of Napoleon Bonaparte.¹ Though this enterprise failed, it served to advertise the great fertility of the soil. With the demise of the French settlement, young planters and college men from all parts of the country rushed in and rapidly took over the rich lands. The first population total obtainable for Marengo are those of 1820, at which time the population was 2933.² By 1860 the population had reached 31,171 persons, or a net gain of approximately 900 per cent in thirty years. Rich lands attracted wealthy people, who bought large tracts of land. For in-

1. Moore, op. cit., pp. 78-80. For a more complete discussion of the French Vine and Olive Company at Demopolis see, Whitfield, Gaius, Jr., The French Grant in Alabama, A History of the Founding of Demopolis, Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, 1899-1905, Vol. IV, pp. 321-355.

2. Below in Table XI the population of Marengo County is given from 1820 to 1930. When possible, the white and Negro population is separated.

stance in 1890, there were 653 farms of 100 to 500 acres in size; 113, 500 to 1000, and 96 which were larger than 1000 acres.¹ About the same ratio held true for 1900, which situation is fairly typical today.

TABLE XI
POPULATION TABLE FOR MARENGO COUNTY
1820 TO 1930²

Year	White	Negro	Total
1820			2,933
1830			7,700
1840			17,269
1850	7,101	20,693	27,831
1860	6,640	24,414	31,171
1870	6,090	20,058	26,151
1880	7,277	23,613	30,890
1890	7,946	25,149	33,095
1900	8,441	29,474	38,315
1910	9,077	30,846	39,923
1920	9,954	26,111	36,065
1930	10,076	26,349	36,426

From the census figures, it can be seen that by 1860 the slave population of Marengo County was 24,414; hence,

1. Census Reports, Agriculture, Eleventh Census: 1890, Vol. V, p. 120.

2. These figures were taken from Census reports for the various years. There are several very interesting facts to be noted from this table. First, the rapid gain in population, especially to 1850; second, the great number of Negroes when these totals first appeared; third, the ratio by which the Negroes outnumber the whites; fourth, a considerable decrease in the Negro population just after the Civil War and just after the World War.

we surmise that Marengo¹ was the home of a large planter class. This fact is still evinced in the fine antebellum homes scattered over the county, of which Gaineswood, near Demopolis, is the most outstanding example. These facts seem to warrant the general statement that Marengo was settled in large part by a slave-holding planter class.² The county since the Civil War has been dominated by the large planter groups.

Out of this type of environment, in Marengo as in other American localities, have come political and social leaders. Some of the political leaders in the nineties are still leaders in county and state politics. A. L. Hasty, Ben F. Elmore, and John C. Anderson are such examples. Important persons in church and social work have come from these leading political groups.

It is uncommon for a large land-holding group, or any group with vested interests, to encourage the expenditure of great sums of money for public schools. At the beginning of the nineties, Marengo was no exception, having a budget of only \$12,675 for teachers' salaries, all of which came from state appropriations.³ This amount had to pay 45 white and 55 colored teachers, and, in ad-

1. The Demopolis Times, "Industrial Number", October 13, 1910.

2. Philips, et. al., op. cit., p. 560; Moore, op. cit., p. 273.

3. Census Reports, Valuation and Taxation, Eleventh Census: 1890, Part II, Vol. XV, p. 602.

4. Ibid., Population, Part II, Vol. I, p. 53.

dition, \$333 for the miscellaneous expenses appertaining to the maintenance of a school system. The 45 white teachers taught 1328 pupils, an average of 30 to the teacher, while the 55 colored teachers taught 2780 pupils, an average of 55 each. For their services, these teachers were paid an average annual salary of \$128.75.

Public school funds were appropriated primarily by the State, with county units occasionally raising funds by way of fees and local subscriptions.¹ Because the Negro children were prorated as much as the white children, both Negro and white school terms were comparatively short. Attention was called to this fact by the County Superintendent, Levi W. Reeves, in making his quarterly report in March, 1890. He urged the need of amending the constitution so that the races would have money appropriated to the schools in proportion to the amount of taxes paid by each race.²

Daniel J. Mador, a representative from Marengo County, led a fight in the legislature for district taxes to support schools in Marengo and other Black Belt counties. He pointed out, in discussing the resolution,

1. The total receipts for education in 1890 were \$12,677; whereas, the total expenditure was \$18,208. Since the expenditure was greater than the income, a deficit of \$551 was created. Fees and subscriptions evidently balanced the school budget: (Census Reports, Valuation and Taxation, Eleventh Census: 1890, Part II, Vol. XV, p. 602).

2. The Linden Reporter, March 14, 1890, quoted from "Quarterly Report" by Levi W. Reeves.

that the whites were paying 90 per cent of the taxes, whereas, the Negroes, paying only 10 per cent of the taxes, derived as much benefit from the school appropriations as did the whites. Some of the Negro schools actually had more money than they used. However, after 1901, under the new Alabama Constitution, Negroes were discriminated against in the allotment of funds for school purposes. This fact has given the Black Belt counties an undue advantage in the public school system of the State.¹

There were no public high schools in the county in the nineties. However, there were several which designated themselves as academies and did secondary school work. The papers of the period constantly carried advertisements of the various academies, their advantages, curricula, and rates. Academies existed at Jefferson, Dixons Mills, Nicholsville, and one was established at Linden in 1890. The Linden Academy was opened by I. I. Canterbury, of Lower Peach Tree (Canterbury later studied law and became the leading criminal lawyer in the county until the late 1920s). In these academies students were taught Latin, French, Greek, German, Literature, Art, Music, Mathematics, and several other branches. Besides Canterbury, other men of ability taught in these academies,

1. Ibid., November 23, 1890.

such as G. S. Mellen, W. H. Owings, and G. M. Thomas.¹

The planter groups did not depend much on these schools and academies, but sent their children to private schools, or hired tutors. They were patrons also of the law schools, medical schools, and the many good schools of arts and sciences over the country. The present chairman of the County Board of Education attended Washington and Lee University in the late nineties. Many others who did not attend the higher institutions of learning, stocked their own libraries with many good books and made excellent use of them.²

Until about 1899, teachers were certified by a local examining board which was present at the teachers' institutions for the purpose of giving examinations.³ Some teachers were well prepared for the responsibility of teaching, but others were woefully unprepared. Probably the general situation, if not the prevailing opinion, was voiced by a local paper which said:

We will never receive any benefit from the public schools until this thing of licensing every Tom, Dick, and Harry is stopped. There are persons teaching in the State who are a disgrace to the profession. Some of them are shamefully ignorant. The examining boards are not doing their duty.⁴

1. *Ibid.*, January 10, August 15, and December 21, 1890.

2. *The Marengo Democrat*, November 16, 1897.

3. *Ibid.*, September 4, 1896.

4. *Ibid.*, November 20, 1896, quoted from the *South Alabamian*.

At that time, summer schools, extension courses, correspondence courses, and reading circles were relatively unknown. Teachers had only one means of training in service, namely, the well known "Teachers' Institutes." These, in many cases, lasted a week. The community in which the institute was held entertained the teachers free of charge.¹ The Negroes held institutes also. At one of these meetings, papers were read on "How to Teach Reading" and "How to teach the Alphabet," and the meeting was climaxed by teachers taking a pledge not to drink or dip snuff.²

The institute held at Dayton in April, 1893, had some interesting topics on the program. Some of these were as follows:

1. How to make good spellers.
2. Elocution in common schools.
3. Best methods of teaching reading.
4. How to cultivate a taste for good literature.
5. Elementary science.
6. Ways of conducting a recitation.
7. Drawing in country schools.
8. How shall we secure good results in penmanship?
9. Best methods of teaching geography.
10. The Bible in country schools.
11. The teacher's opportunity.
12. The demand of the age.
13. Requisites of a good disciplinarian.
14. Language lessons for young children.
15. How shall we make arithmetic practical?
16. Can girls learn mathematics?
17. Methods of teaching politeness.
18. Calisthenics for country schools.

1. Ibid., October 9, 1891.

2. Ibid., April 3, 1891.

19. Boys will be Boys.¹

Sometimes the teachers convened at the request of the county superintendent of education, and sometimes the state superintendent would request a meeting. At that time, the Department of Education was not organized, as such, and representatives of the State could not meet with the teachers, as was the case later when the Department of Education was organized. State Superintendent Harris of Montgomery requested a meeting of the teachers of Marengo County. The meeting convened at Manafalia, August 4, 1893. Topics of a financial nature gave rise to most of the discussions. However, other topics were discussed, three of which are herewith given. They were: "Male and female teachers, their success in the school room", "Co-education, should it be encouraged?", and "Should the State adopt a uniform series of text books?"²

Another typical institute was held at Sweetwater in September, 1896.³ Some of the most prominent features of the program were the following topics:

1. Some of the best plans of teaching reading,
I. D. H. McLure
2. Spelling and its importance,
J. B. Little
3. Should algebra be taught in our common schools?
W. A. McLeod
4. Moral duty of parents to educate their children,
J. B. Cassidy

1. Ibid., April 17, 1893.
2. The Linden Reporter, August 7, 1893.
3. Ibid., September 4, 1893.

5. School management.
J. B. Little

An evaluation of these programs indicates the fact that some of these topics are still timely while others are long past any consideration. For instance, one topic discussed at an institute was one which we now accept without argument, namely: "Should our girls have the same advantages as our boys?" No doubt the teachers and leaders thought seriously on these and other topics, and much good was accomplished. It is true the institutes in Alabama and in Marengo County have not yet been abandoned, but its importance in the educational scheme is for purposes of securing administrative efficiency and coordination, and not for teacher training in service.

At the regular session of the legislature in 1899, a law was passed requiring all teachers to take a state examination, preparatory to teaching in the public schools. In anticipation of the coming examination, a summer school was organized at Linden in the summer of 1899 under the direction of L. G. Biggers, Principal of the Linden High School.¹

When the first state examination for the licensing of teachers was held in Marengo County, nine white and

1. Ibid., June 2, 1899.

thirty-two colored prospective teachers took the examination. Of the white applicants, eight of the nine passed the examination; but of the thirty-two colored applicants taking the examination, only twelve passed.¹

After Biggers had prepared the teachers, one failed and several received lower certificates than those for which they had applied. For this, Biggers was very critical of the State Board of Examiners and openly condemned it in the press.² Dr. John W. Abercrombie, State Superintendent of Education, wrote a letter to the teachers of Marengo County in which he roundly scored Biggers and made a few comments on the papers of those who failed. Of these he wrote:

One applicant solved only three problems correctly out of eight. Two Arithmetic papers were identical. One applicant for first grade solved four Algebra problems out of ten. The six questions in Geography solicited widely varying answers. One illustration follows:

'Name the principal political divisions of the Western Hemisphere.

Answer: North and South America, Danish America and the West Indies, Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic Oceans, Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea. Two of the papers were exactly alike... Many teachers, who should be easily able to obtain first grade certificates, have gone into the examination without reviewing the elementary branches and for that reason have failed to answer the simplest questions!³

1. *Ibid.*, August 25, 1899.

2. *Ibid.*, August 11, 1899.

3. *The Marengo Democrat*, November 9, 1899, quoted from letter written by Dr. John W. Abercrombie.

However, it must not be concluded that Marengo teachers made a poorer record on these early examinations than teachers from other parts of the State. The writer has heard one member of this first examining board read typical, or rather unusual, answers given to various questions in the different subjects.¹

This early beginning seems today rather crude. Probably it was, but foundations were laid which have enabled Marengo to construct one of the first dozen best systems in the State. A large part of that, however, is due to the fact that the population is still about 77.5 per cent Negro. The Negro child draws its proportional part of money from the state treasury, but he does not get his share in the county distribution.²

The three major Protestant denominations, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian, were well organized and cared for the religious needs of the people in the nineties. The extent of the work and influence may be inferred from the table below which gives the membership, number of church buildings, and valuation of these buildings in Marengo County.³

1. The writer heard several papers read by Dr. G. W. Brock, President Emeritus of State Teachers College, Livingston, Alabama. Dr. Brock was a member of the examining board for a number of years before he transferred his services to Livingston.

2. Information obtained from County Superintendent of Education, George H. Watson, Linden, Alabama.

3. Census Reports, Churches, Eleventh Census: 1890, Vol. II, p. 52.

TABLE XII

Religious Denominations	Total Membership	No. edifices	Value of property
Baptist	1159 white 5129 colored	15 white 53 colored	\$11,400 white 35,251 col.
Methodist	820 white 1319 colored	10 white 12 colored	16,155 white 6,610 col.
Presbyterian	388 white 0 colored	11 white 0 colored	16,300 white 0,000 col.
Episcopalian	42 white 0 colored	1 white 0 colored	1,000 white 0,000 col.

These religious bodies were careful to keep their churches in constant repair, and to build new ones where needed to meet the growing needs of the community and church membership. The Methodists of Demopolis built a modern brick church in 1895. The Baptist there dedicated a handsome new edifice the same year, while the Episcopalians completed extensive repair work on their house of worship.¹

These churches in many cases were well organized and provided Sunday schools for the young and for the membership as a whole. Many of them had organizations of the women for the promotion of the church, missionary work, and the relief for the destitute of the various communities.

1. The Montgomery Advertiser, April 5, 1895.

The most typical women's organization was the Ladies' Aid Society which was doing a very effective work at Linden, Dixons Mills, Shiloh, and Octagon. Funds were raised by means of oyster suppers, rummage sales, collections for orphans, ¹mite boxes, sale of iced tea, chicken suppers, and so forth.

Further evidence of organization of the churches is shown by the fact that county wide meetings of the denominations were held from time to time. The Bethel Baptist Sunday School Convention met at Shiloh in January, 1890, and drew people from all over Marengo and adjoining ²counties. The names of Vice, Dunning, Doyle, Meador, Pritchett, and many others still prominent in Marengo County affairs, occupied conspicuous places on the program.

The Seventy-eighth annual session of the Bethel Baptist Association was held in Linden in October, 1898. Nearly every church in the county was represented, and the delegates were entertained in the homes of the people of Linden for three days. The same organization met at Manafalia the following year. Honorable D. J. Meador of Myrtlewood served as moderator, Lamar Matkin of Linden as

1. The Linden Reporter, January 9, 16, 27, 1890.

2. Ibid., January 20, 1890.

clerk, and W. K. Thomas of Manafalia as Treasurer. As was noticed in the first two chapters of this paper, these men were very prominent in the political affairs of the county.¹

The Methodist Church does not enjoy local autonomy and hence the practice of having county-wide meetings of that denomination was lacking. The annual Conference of the Methodists changed the pastors of the various churches periodically, sometimes yearly, and sometimes a pastor remained in one charge as much as four years. Sometimes one of these men would serve seven or eight churches, preaching three sermons every Sunday, visiting the sick, and burying the dead.² The circuit rider of the nineties had a rather hard time for there were no good roads, railroads, nor modern conveniences of travel as is the case today. They led a life that tried the souls of men. It is difficult to visualize what it meant to travel the poor roads in wet weather, unless one has experienced the Marengo mud of the winter season.

The advent of good roads and automobiles in Marengo County has rung the death knell of many a country church. Mount Pleasant, Gilgal, Geneva, Pisgah, Shiloh, Mount Olive, and others stand empty and deserted, hollow reminders of past, thriving religious bodies.

1. The Marengo Democrat, October 19, 1898.

2. The Linden Reporter, July 1, 1898.

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